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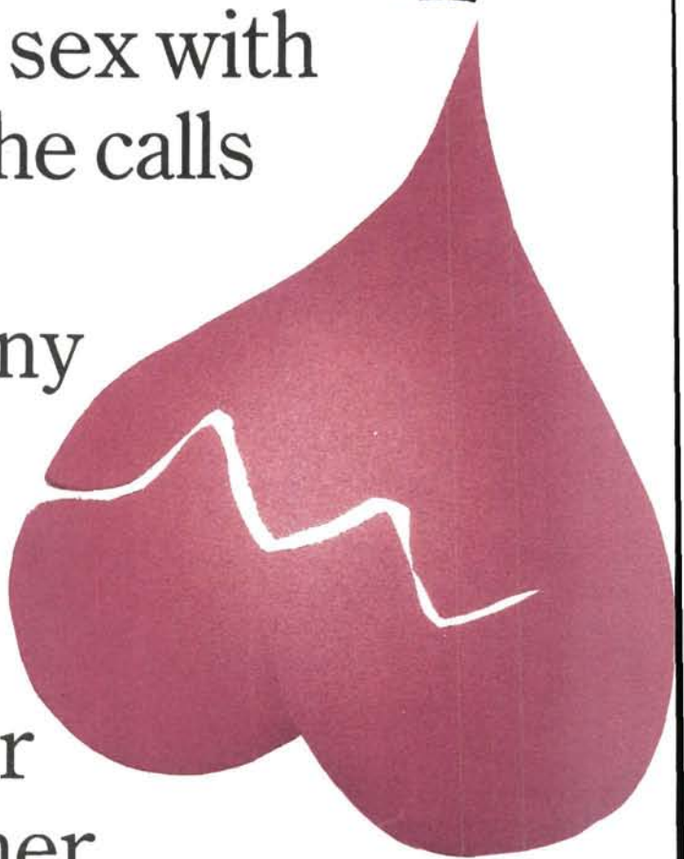

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Hanif Kureishi: Saatchi and Thatcher

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Cover: Tony Garrett

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DIARY

Sean French

My principal conclusion from a fortnight spent at Edinburgh is that the more the festival has declined, the more coverage it has got. The film festival—where I spent most of my days—consists of films that are just about to be commercially released and others that have been well aired elsewhere. The official festival was widely pronounced a failure while the fringe had, for the most part, been driven into playing safe by the exorbitant costs of mounting even the smallest production in the city.

Yet the press attention was greater than ever before. As well as featuring extensive reviews, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Observer* (for whom I was writing) published special Edinburgh supplements that were distributed only in the city. This is understandable, since there is now a newspaper battle going on in Scotland—especially between the quality Sundays.

The extensive coverage by the dailies was harder to understand, out of all proportion to any interest that its readers might have. The *Independent* gave it more than a whole page a day, the *Guardian* about half of that. These listings were only useful in Edinburgh and if you're in Edinburgh you can get a daily diary for nothing.

The most convincing explanation for this was given to me by Paul Driver, *Sunday Times* music critic, just after he had appeared on television claiming that the music festival had to be dismantled and started again from scratch. The point was that the newspapers were now interested in providing listings. For this, if little else, the festival was now the ideal vehicle. It had come to a point where the listings justified the festival rather than vice versa.

Listings have become popular in recent years. Companies have been created to supply them by the yard. With new technology they are easy and cheap to compile and update. And they also have an efficient, business-like appearance that gets us away from the airy-fairy reviews that used to take up all the space on arts pages. The *Independent* even has a listings page which is a rival to its arts page, doing its own reviews and interviews.

It is a paradox that this summer the newspaper that was invented for the serious reader has been full of acres of newsprint that are impossible to read, like the Edinburgh listings, the endless University Class Lists and A.N. Wilson's new novel.

From the fringes of a newspaper war in Edinburgh, I returned to the fringes of a newspaper war in London. I was astonished to read in last week's *NSS* that the *Sunday Times* is planning to launch a new section entitled *Sunday Times New Society*. And as a result, Jeremy Laurance, the old social services editor on *New Society*, is going to join the paper. It sounds rather like the beginning of a joke. What do you get when you cross *New Society* with the *Sunday Times?*

Perhaps the content of the new section will be lifted wholesale as well, with, of course, certain ideological adjustments to fit in with the prevailing *Sunday Times* ethos. The weekly Welfare Advice column, for example, will have to give instructions about how to crack down on social security scroungers. There'll be a weekly Reargunner Perkins column about amusing experiences in American private prisons. Ray Honeyford will be the new joint education and race correspondent.

And my old column, "As I Please", will be retitled "His Master's Voice", and the author will be pictured with the left rather than the right side of his face under shadow.

I imagine that many people must have wondered why the *Sunday Times* is bothering with this area. Most of its readers would assume that the paper's editors and owner were opposed to everything that the old *New Society* stood for: state-funded public services, objective academic research as a necessary influence on social policy, and beyond these a conviction that while holding to certain principles the magazine could be the vehicle for a wide range of conflicting political opinion, and for no political opinion at all.

The motives for starting the section are, quite understandably, commercial ones. The *Guardian* gets a lot of local authority advertising on Wednesdays and it must be vulnerable to the immense resources of the post-Wapping *Sunday Times*. But nevertheless what will they have to say in the section?

There is another way of looking at all this. In the last couple of years, ex-*New Society* members have become deputy news editor, education correspondent and now social services correspondent of the paper. This may be the most subtle takeover in commercial history.

Meanwhile New Society isn't the only name being purloined. Mark Ambrose has written to me from Bristol to tell me that Bryant Homes are apparently marketing an "executive-style" house called "The New Statesman". I take this to be estate agent's jargon for dwellings that have recently been revamped but are still leaning to the left.

It must be wonderful to be paid for being so lazy. I feel that on top of my current responsibilities I could quite easily invent titles for new *Sunday Times* sections and houses for Bryant Homes. Not only that, I'd also be really good at thinking up headlines for *Q* magazine. They had a terrific one in the current issue for their review of Chris Menges's new anti-apartheid film, *A World Apart*. They called the piece "Cry Freedom". By contrast, *Vogue* headlined their interview in this month's magazine with Shawn Slovo, author of *A World Apart*, with Zen-like simplicity: "A World Apart". As Yosser Hughes put it, I could do that.

It was my father's birthday last week and one of the presents I gave him he gave straight back to me. Ties are usually boring but safe. This one, bought from a trendy Covent Garden shop, had the label stuck on the back, "Royal Navy Volontary [sic] Reserves Club". My father is an old national serviceman and it seems such things as wearing the wrong club tie are just not done.

I don't understand this. My favourite of my own ties belongs to a school I didn't attend. When I was at university I occasionally used to wear an MCC tie to which I wasn't entitled. Admittedly this did cause grave offence to some members of the very stuffy institution I attended, and equally admittedly that was the reason I wore it.

I'm not the only person to do so. In his classic comic primer, *Gamesmanship*, Stephen Potter recalled: "At Oxford, though never a blue, I used to wear a blue's tie—particularly when playing games against nice men who knew I had no right to wear the honour. This simple trick, which is said by psychologists to induce the 'pseudo-schizophrenic syndrome', or doubt, was most effective in moving-ball games."

Or, to put it in political terms, if your tie is false it undermines the authority of everyone else's tie as well. Which is the whole point.

ROGER WODDIS

Cargoes, '88

(Acknowledgements to John Masefield)

Karin B from Italy and far Nigeria,
Slipping into Britain for a likely berth,
With a cargo of chemicals,
Industrial solvent,
Leaking drums of rubbish to pollute the earth.

Sweet Virginia Bottomley, environment minister,
Left in tears and horrified by toxic waste,
With a cargo of statements,
Heartfelt homilies,
Diatribes, dying seals and doubtful taste.

Dirty man of Europe with an eye on profit,
Poisoning the oceans till they're sick of it,
With a cargo of garbage,
Lies, excuses,
Humbug, double-talk and tonnes of shit.

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The dogs of war

Both sides in Northern Ireland are obsessed by the body count. Why not give politics a chance?

Andrzej Krauze

The upsurge in IRA violence should remind us that there's a war on: a war which has in its latest manifestation lasted now for one generation and which will last at least for another. Curiously, however, though the British government long ago adopted a policy of low-intensity warfare against the IRA, the official line has always been to deny the fact.

The Provos are undoubtedly unrepresentative of the "Irish" people in whose name they kill: they have the electoral backing of about 11 per cent in the north and 2 per cent in the south. But in Northern Ireland that 11 per cent represents a tenacious minority culture in the cities and hinterlands which is constantly renewed by the tactics of low-intensity warfare. Since the troubles began again in the sixties, the oppressions of 50 years of one-party rule have been constantly replenished: by "Bloody Sunday", internment, brutal interrogations, strip searches, plastic bullets, and "shoot-to-kill" policies . . . plus the heavy-handed (and often deliberately humiliating) security presence and the no-hopeism of unfair employment practice.

It may very well be good propaganda (and true in part) to represent the IRA as cowardly and callous killers, godfathers who rule by intimidation and prosper by racketeering, artificial creatures of the "oxygen of publicity". But it is a superficial base for security measures and no base at all for British policy in Ireland. The facts are that the Provos' demands reflect real desires for the future of Ireland; and that their support is founded on real grievances which are beyond eradication by Britain's public policies in the province. The security forces have on countless occasions been on the brink of burying the IRA. But something always turns up. It's Semtex this time round. The reality is that they will no more be shot out of existence than they can be rationalised away.

What are the Provos really about? Since the late 1970s, when the Adams faction came to power, they have been committed to "the long war"—a Vietcong-style war of attrition which would wear down the British will to remain in Ireland. Sinn Fein were to put down roots among the Catholic *sans culottes* and, according to a leaked IRA document, "come under [Irish Republican] Army orders at all levels". After the hunger strikes, Sinn Fein's role was broadened to participating in elections, but contrary to some wishful thinking, the political wing is not led by proto-constitutionalists who can be weaned away from their brothers-in-arms. A military-political commitment unites the movement. That commitment is to blasting Britain out of Ireland.

For the next year or so the Provos intend to sustain a high-profile campaign, using a series of 20th anniversaries from the first big civil rights march in Derry in September 1968 through to the arrival of British troops (August 1969) and beyond. To raise Ireland's position on the British political agenda, they are singling out British military personnel for attack. Gerry Adams explains the body-count politics of media publicity thus: "One dead British soldier is worth four dead RUC men."

Mrs Thatcher, in response, has unleashed the dogs of war. But Northern Ireland doesn't need yet more dead bodies. The complex war there is not a Falklands to be resolved by purely military means, and certainly not by cold-blooded revenge operations like Cloughfin. They destroy any hope at all of restoring confidence in Britain's good faith among the minority population. Some in Belfast still hanker for the twin policy of containment and reform. But events have put both aims out of reach.

The bipartisan view in London is that Britain must blunder on in Northern Ireland because that's what the majority wants. That sounds unexceptionably democratic, but it ignores the inconvenient fact that the minority is not properly represented. To be a Catholic there is to be a non-citizen. We on the mainland may very well sympathise with the majority's wish to preserve their independence from Dublin, but we are under no obligation to continue supplying young men to kill and be killed in the province to sustain the status quo there.

The bloody problems of Northern Ireland are insoluble, militarily or politically, within the current constitutional framework. Perhaps they are insoluble anyway. But they will only be solved by self-determination. All manner of settlements are possible; but only if Britain sets a date for the removal of its troops and with the Republic deploys its military and economic powers to facilitate a way forward from murder.

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AP

All Gummed up—Mrs T in Moscow

Poles apart

Whenever Mrs Thatcher drops in on the "evil empire" she tries to get in a spot of shopping. She knows the Gum store in Moscow and the vegetable markets of Budapest. This year its Poland's turn with Mrs Thatcher widely expected to arrive in October. But on this occasion she may as well leave her purse at home because it is unlikely that her hosts will want to take her to the local supermarket.

If she does get a peek in she will immediately understand the frustrations of daily life in contemporary Poland. During recent weeks the shortages have grown and the queues have been getting longer, the prices ever higher. And though the wage packets are also bulkier, the people have had enough.

Poland is the country of empty shelves. Durables, like furniture, colour TVs or cars are rarely seen in the shops and consumer expectations are low. This summer things have got worse. Officials have confessed to shortages of a huge range of goods including children's clothing, tights, soap, toothpaste, margarine, sugar, fish and meat.

The poor state of the economy, impervious it seems to the economic reform launched within weeks of the imposition of martial law in December 1981, is fertile ground for widespread unrest. The authorities, of course, are as aware of this as anyone else. In May the government asked parliament to grant it "special powers" to enable it to speed up the reform process. The idea was to act directly to sack inefficient management and restructure industry. But the workers remain unconvinced by this talk of economic reform. A special bill accepted by parliament is simply no substitute for genuine social pressure for reform.

This message may at last be getting through to the Polish party. During recent months there has been increasing speculation that "historic" compromise between party and people may be worked out. The government press spokesman Jerzy Urban talks about the need for a "pro-reform coalition" which would, in principle, exclude no one. Meanwhile opponents from union and Church circles speak about the need for a broad "anti-crisis pact".

Strikes in 1988 have clearly put the authorities under pressure to move more quickly towards some form of social contract. But there are obvious sticking points. The authorities are adamant that there can be no renewed legality for Solidarity. There can be discussions, but no more than that say officials, on a more distant prospect of trade union pluralism. On the other hand the party's attitude towards Lech Walesa appeared, at least before he joined the August sit-in at the Gdansk shipyard, to be more relaxed.

The authorities seem more open too to the idea that a richer variety of independent social groups (such as the clubs of the Catholic intelligentsia) should be allowed to exist, but new political organisations remain excluded.

Talk of coalition and compromise is not new in Poland. In the final months of 1981, Church, party and society sat frequently together round the negotiating table but no settlement was found. The outcome was martial law. Second time round the central issue in Poland is again how to bridge the chasm separating society from state.

It is hardly conceivable today, with *perestroika* and *glasnost* on the loose, that there can be a return to military rule. Moreover, after six years of failing to decentralise the economy, there are signs that Jaruzelski genuinely understands that political accommodation is a prerequisite for economic revival. The pressures for compromise continue to mount but one crucial unknown is whether the "opposition" is prepared to participate in an environment that, for the foreseable future, will exclude Solidarity. *George Blazyca*

Something worth nothing

NATO's cynically pragmatic "Montebello 2" arms control plan, revealed in *NSS* (24 June), has been confirmed by General John Galvin, Supreme Allied Commander-Europe, in Washington. He made it clear that NATO plans to announce major cuts in the numbers of short-range nuclear artillery shells based in Europe, a unilateral measure, but only if programmes to up-date other weapons are agreed by NATO governments in the autumn.

NATO thus intends to modernise the weapons it regards as essential for its flexible response policy of first-use, while getting rid of less useful weapons. All the attention will be focussed on the latter, while it is hoped that the key decision slips through unnoticed.

Ever since the INF agreement, NATO's planners have been worried that the momentum for disarmament which is building up would involve the so-called "third zero", getting rid of remaining short range, land-based mis iles in Europe. These are not covered by the INF treaty but the Soviets are prepared to accept this extension.

NATO's fear is that this would drive a coach and horses through the flexible response policy, as it would include the loss of the Lance nuclear artillery missiles, a key component in first-use targeting. NATO badly wants a longer range replacement for the Lance, and also wants a new air-launched cruise missile, but both would be widely opposed by public opinion and many political parties in Western Europe.

The hope is that attention will be neatly diverted from the plan for two new weapons after NATO's Nuclear Planning Group meeting in the autumn, by a PR onslaught and fanfare about NATO's brave unilateral gesture. Public opinion will be satisfied and demand for further arms control evaporate—unilateral disarmament of unwanted weapons to avoid East-West negotiations on the essential weapons, a neat trick. *Paul Rogers*

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE

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The party's over

The crisis in Britain's balance of trade will be more than a passing squall. The opposition has been quick to spot that this may be the moment it's been waiting for when the government overreaches itself and ceases to convince the public that it has all the economic answers. But Mrs Thatcher can expect trouble closer to home if she uses the crisis to cut back on public spending, as is expected.

Ministers have exceeded all previous records with their bids for a slice of next year's Treasury cake, overreaching planned targets by a full £9 billion. Some of the big spenders are likely to reject any proposition that public spending should be checked when, as they see it, the problem is with the private sector and a spending boom the Chancellor has allowed to spin out of control.

Tory "wets" are arguing privately that putting up interest rates is scarcely a free market policy and, in any case, is unlikely to work as foreign banks will simply pour money into Britain to make money from the higher rates. Only a steep rise would have any effect but British industry would suffer. They believe that the Chancellor will impose liquidity requirements on banks, the only clumsy instrument left after recklessly shedding all previous controls. Banks would be able to lend only a percentage of their liquid deposits.

Sideshows at the Conservative party conference are likely to be enlivened by this debate. Colleagues of a regular on the Fringe, Welsh Secretary Peter Walker, say he is likely to use the occasion to remind anyone who may be interested that there is an alternative. *John Lewis*

Violence society set up

If anything can warm Mrs Thatcher's heart then this should: a pressure group founded by a small businessman to reinstall a sense of civic values. A welcome, please, to the Society Against Violence and Extortion (the "Extortion" being there primarily for acronymic purposes), the brainchild of Lincolnshire property developer Peter Brown, and 12 like-minded friends.

Mr Brown came to our attention when sent us a hair-raising press release and a begging letter asking for free advertising in *NSS*. Mr Brown favours punishment—lots of it. "SAVE," says his press release, "does not think that 'slap on the wrist' sentences by the courts will ever secure improvements. Common sense already tells us that society is entitled to protection and that violent and cowardly thugs will not be raping or mugging anyone if they are securely behind bars." Etcetera.

The group also aims "to become a collecting house for all matters related to violence and expects to amass more information on the subject than any other organisation... what are needed are some new and very positive measures."

Such as? A call to Mr Brown elicited the proposal that all children should receive compulsory education in "citizenship", with exams in the subject. According to Mr Brown: "It seems that some of the kids these days genuinely don't know the difference between right and wrong. It's gone on for so long that we haven't got a first generation of hooligans – we've got a second and third generation one." Fundamentally, he thinks, "we've been too liberal; we've given into our children as if it was some kind of religion."

He is not terribly specific on the nitty-gritty: apart from general moral laxity he has no more idea of what causes crime than the rest of us. On capital punishment he favours a referendum—but would not tell us his own opinion on the subject. He has gathered some 100 supporters around the country but, perhaps surpringly, has had the brush-off from politicians of all parties despite SAVE's apparently rabid right-wing programme. Mr Brown professes to be a socialist ("socialists are supposed to care for us all as a society") but has few kind words for Roy Jenkins who was "utterly stupid" in not being prepared to build enough prisons to take all the country's criminals. *Jolyon Jenkins*

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This is no ordinary baby.—*The Sun* (George Moor)

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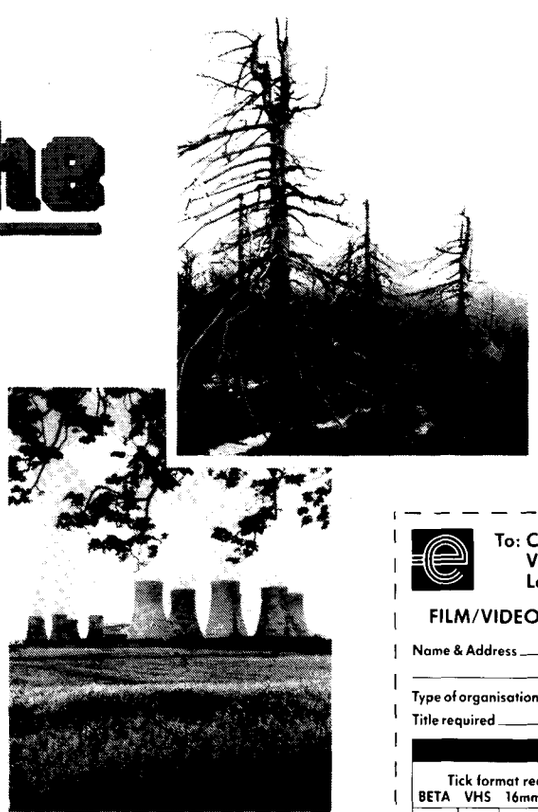
Acid from the Sky



'Acid from the Sky' is available on 'free loan' or for sale on 16mm film and on VHS, Beta, and U-matic video formats.

This new film from the Central Electricity Generating Board explores the issue of air pollution and the damage to lakes and forests attributed to acid rain. Shot in Britain, Scandinavia and Germany, 'Acid from the Sky' features interviews with leading experts and looks at the range of research projects investigating the nature of the problem and searching for possible solutions. The film also considers the technological programme being implemented by the CEGB in response to this problem.

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On the premises

British philosophy may not be dead but it is uninspiring. Jolyon Jenkins went to Brighton to find out why

Just as Copernicus irreversibly changed our view of the universe, so David Lodge has permanently shifted the parameters of conference reporting. It's impossible to contemplate the convergence on Brighton last week of a thousand international philosophers for the 18th World Congress of Philosophy without thinking of Lodge's opus classicus, *Small World*. Academic conferences—modern Canterbury Pilgrimages—exist as a means of jostling for position in the profession. For those at the summit, there's the accolade of being invited to address a plenary session. One rung down, your paper may be accepted for presentation at a "session" or "round table". At the bottom, those whose papers are rejected will probably deliver them, come what may, disguised as questions to other speakers. And all the while, a sub-plot of adulterous liaisons simmers.

None of this was immediately apparent in Brighton: impossible to conceive the hundred stolid Soviet delegates whooping it up after hours in the Metropole, or Professor Abderrazzak from Algeria thowing wine over Professor Mulung from Zaire. (The most exciting event was the *NSS* photographer being taken in for questioning by the police, accused of looking like an IRA terrorist.) As for the back-stabbing, the cut-and-thrust—well, a research student from Balliol College, Oxford, told me: "Some of these papers are three or four years old. If I'd known it was going to be like this I would have submitted one of my own." Professor Richard M. Hare, the grand old man of Oxford Ethics, announced that if this was supposed to be the Olympics of philosophy, "the torch never reached Brighton".

The deficiencies of the conference were a boon to newspapers, who decided early on that philosophy was a bit of a laugh anyway. The *Guardian* was especially confused. It thought the event sufficiently important to have a reporter in Brighton for the whole week. Yet the stories he filed were—at least to start with—doggedly flippant, as if convinced that analytic philosophy was no more than intellectual masturbation. His second piece reported that half the conference was "a private discussion among consenting adults, mostly of Anglo-Saxon origin, about language, syntax and logic. Its participants revel in the rigour of their arguments and their virtuoso feats of analytical discourse. Their heroes are philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, and the German mathematical logician Gottlieb Frege, and they often delight in the uselessness of philosophical inquiry."

Oxford's Hare: defending philosophy

Would anyone take the piss out of mathematicians for revelling in the rigour of their arguments? Physicists' subject matter is equally esoteric—but Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* has topped the bestseller lists for weeks. Philosophers, meanwhile, are ticked off for being—as the *NSS* review of Hawking's book put it—"engaged in some form of Wittgensteinian copout: the only remaining task for philosophy is the analysis of language."

Vesselin Petkov, of the Institute of Philosophy at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, is certainly no such sub-lexicographer, and his work has something in common with Hawking's. I met Vesselin in Brighton at a "poster session"—an opportunity for frustrated participants to get their rejected papers across somehow. You are allotted a pin board, to which you attach a copy of the paper, a chair to sit on, and you wait, like a Turkish shoe-shine boy on a pavement, for customers. As business was slow for Vesselin and the four other poster-merchants I asked him to explain his paper "The Flow of Time — Objective or Mind Dependent?"

"My thesis is that it is not possible for the flow of time to be objective and the consequences of the special theory of relativity to be true," he said. "I start from the position that the flow of time is objective only if reality is a three-dimensional world, that is if events are objectively divided into past present and future. If the flow of time is not objective and events are not sliced into past present and future but have an equal existence, reality can not be a three-dimensional world, since the three-dimensional world is only the class of material objects existing simultaneously now."

"Why?" I asked, playing for time. It's usually a safe thing to ask a philosopher.

He looked at me gravely. "If we live in a four-dimensional world, with time as the fourth dimension, then time is not sliced, but past, present and future events have to be considered as existing equally. And if time is mind-dependent, then that is because we live in a world that is..."

"Three-dimensional," I interrupted.

"...four-dimensional," he concluded lamely. Progress was clearly going to be slow: we were still on the first page. Vesselin gave me a copy of his paper—a precious carbon copy: not many xerox machines in Bulgaria—and I took it away. I think the point is that, because the special theory of relativity says that observers in relative motion have different three-dimensional worlds, then, if we are to hold onto the belief that objects are observer-independent, we have to accept that the world is four-dimensional. That suggests that the passage of time (or our passage through time) is an illusion: we are back with the old theory of Zeno and the Eleatics that there is no change. Vesselin Petkov thinks he has a way out of that uncomfortable position, but I don't understand it.

The real problem for philosophy is that it's *hard*. Physics is too—but philosophy grows out of universal concerns and proceeds to produce totally obscure answers. Hilary Putnam, the American philosopher (and arguably the best analytic philosopher around), argues in his book *Mind, Language and Reality* that "it is easier to learn the names of a few philosophers than it is to read their books. Those who find philosophy overly 'technical' today would no more have found the time or the inclination to follow Socrates' long chains of arguments or to read one of the Critiques in an earlier day." Putnam wrote that "the culture requires that one profess an admiration for Philosophy, or at least the Great Philosophers. It is natural, therefore, to say that one is bored, not with Philosophy, but with the current generation of philosophers."

That was in 1975. Nowadays the culture barely makes that minimal demand. Mary Midgley wrote an open letter at the start of the year to the journal *Philosophy* in which she called for a public defence of her subject. She said that "People—not just politicians and university administrators, but the general public—have very little idea what philosophers are supposed to be doing at all, apart from the vague impression that it is something pointless and out-of-date." British philosophy's acute *political* crisis must owe something to this. Whole university departments are being closed; there are only six lecturers in the country under 30; and the number of academics teaching the subject has fallen by 25 per cent since 1980. In reply to protests, the government says that genius will always thrive: Socrates was a one-man philosophy department and he survived without state help. Er, up to a point, Mr Baker.

I'd guess that Midgley underestimates the difficulty. It's not that people don't know what analytic philosophy is: they wrongly think they do. There's a strong misconception that British philosophy was killed off

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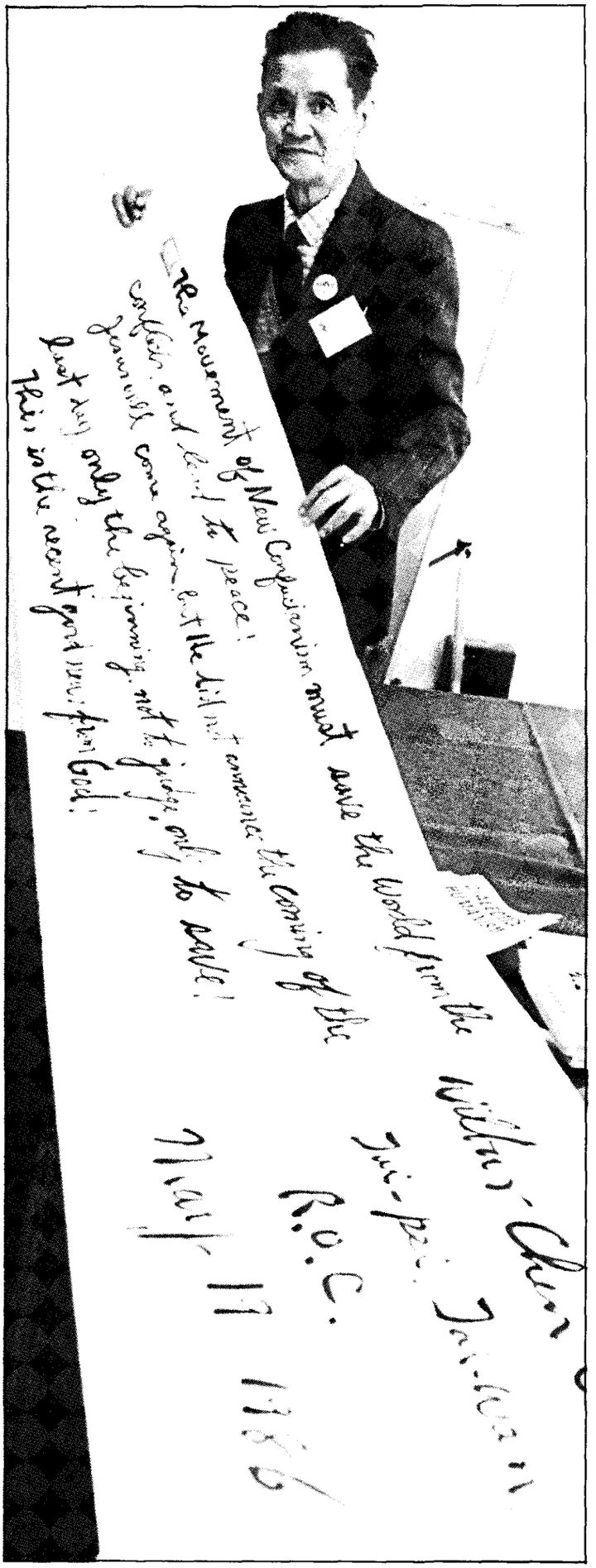
The Movement of New Confusionism must save the World from the Nihilistic Chaos
Anti-pope
R.O.C.
May 11 1984
Philip Polglaze

by logical positivism, "Oxford philosophy", and "ordinary language philosophy" —which are often conflated and confused to produce the idea of a discipline obsessed with language.

But crude logical positivism was junked decades ago. And a linguistic approach (there are so many different kinds that it makes no sense to talk of "linguistic philosophy") is often just an attempt to get ancient fuzzy problems clearer. For example, instead of asking the unanswerable "what is Truth?", philosophers ask the more manageable "what is it for a sentence to be true?" For another example, the maligned Frege has an answer to "what is Existence?" It is, he says, a "second level predicate", by which he means that it's a property of properties. Much modern philosophy is tightly knit with other disciplines. The Americans Dan Dennett and Jerry Fodor are pushing forward philosophy of mind (though in different directions) in startlingly exciting ways, informed by advances in psychology. If you look in the journal *Analysis* (not easy, now that no public library in London stocks it) you see that Adam Morton at Bristol and G.M.K Hunt at Warwick were examining the epistemological consequences of Chaotics at least a year before this magazine discovered it. Is British philosophy in decline? I could find no delegate at Brighton—from any country—who would say it was: most were astounded at the idea.

But the terms in which British philosophers defend their subject are uninspiring. Most I spoke to at Brighton wanted to discuss only the organisation of their particular department and its place within their university. For a more rigorous defence of the subject I turned to the archetypal Oxford moral philosopher, Richard Hare.

"You've probably read the recent correspondence in the *Times*? Bernard Levin and other people, about using pigs' tissues for transplants? Well Bernard Levin says, quoting Pascal, that, you know, the heart has its reasons that reason knows nothing of, and my heart is against using pig tissues, and all that sort of rhetorical stuff, and some doctors have—rather apologetically—been writing in and saying, well our hearts tell us that the plight of diabetics is really quite serious and that kind of stuff. Now a philosopher faced with that could at once put his finger on the point of issue. And it is this: whether one relies on one's heart, as Bernard Levin calls it, in deciding such questions. And the answer is,"—he turned and paused for breath—"only if one's heart is in the right place! And you need something to tell you when it is in the right place, which is what philosophy is supposed to do. Then you've got to have a way of telling good from bad arguments and this is what I do as a philosopher. Philosophy is essentially about the difference between a good and bad argument.

"*Perhaps* if philosophy were more widely understood and more studied, and all these students who wanted to study philosophy were allowed to do it, then it could be that policy questions could be decided more rationally. Things have gone down hill. At the time of the abortion act and the Wolfenden Report, people used to argue much more rationally than they do now."

It's easy to agree with 90 per cent of this. It's in the other 10 per cent that Hare may lose the sympathy of Britain's non-philosophical intelligentsia. He dismisses—maybe tongue-in-cheek—"continental" philosophers: "I don't think continentals studying the meaning of life really does them very much good, because their works are so vague it's almost impossible to tell what they are saying. It's a travesty to say that the continentals provide useful answers

"Philosophy is for telling the difference between good and bad arguments"

to problems: they don't provide anything useful because nobody can understand what they are saying. Have you ever heard any continental philosopher say anything clear about anything?" And Hare ties himself too firmly for comfort to John Locke's conception of the philosopher as a mere "underlabourer" in "the commonwealth of learning".

If philosophy is to survive the predations of this philistine government it will have to be a lot more positive than this. It will need to find a public voice other than 69-year-old Hare's Oxford smugness; and moral philosophers (I'd excuse Hare from this accusation) will have to resist the temptation to jump for the lifeboats, leaving the metaphysicians, epistemologists, logicians, aestheticians and phenomenologists to go down with the ship.

In 1912, Bertrand Russell, one of the most rarified philosophers ever , justified his subject like this: "Through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind is also rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good." Of course, no one would dare say such things nowadays.

Unfurling the secrets of the universe

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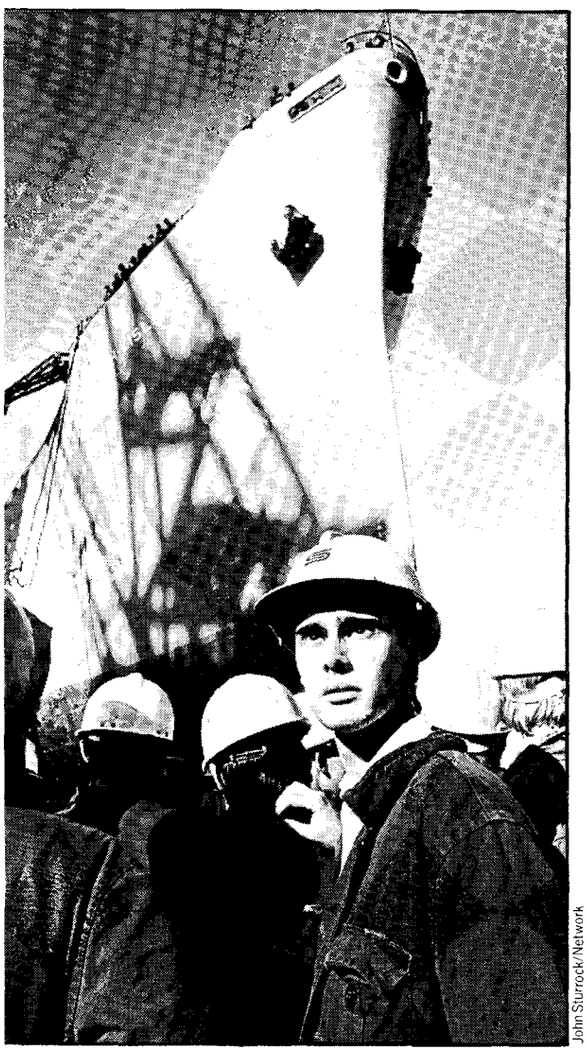
United they fall

Unions may mean better pay, especially for ethnic minorities, but they also mean lower productivity and fewer jobs. David Metcalf poses some awkward questions for the TUC



John Sturrock/Network

Sunset in Cleveland: heavily unionised industries tend to low profitability and productivity

All eyes at the Trade Union Congress next week will be on the fate of the electrician's union (the EETPU). Although the immediate cause of the rift between the electricians and the rest of the labour movement is the willingness of the EETPU to sign single-union deals with no strike clauses, the breach has much more fundamental roots than that.

For the electricians are the vanguard of the "new realism". They concentrate on the *size* of the industrial cake and are prepared to co-operate with management to increase output and raise both real wages and profits. Traditional unions concentrate on the *distribution* of the cake. True to a more adversarial style of industrial relations they focus on the size of the slices going to pay and profits rather than on the size of the cake itself.

But both styles of unionism have their drawbacks. New evidence on the effects of unions on pay, productivity, profits and jobs suggests that the more traditional unions—transport and general, seamen and railwaymen, for example—will have to tread very carefully to avoid further big membership losses. But equally, the electricians and engineers will have to work hard to maintain the traditional pay premium (or extra pay) that their members get over and above a comparable non-union worker.

As union activity raises pay and reduces labour productivity (see table 1), profits are consequently lower in union companies. "Good," some would say, "unions are succeeding in their aims. It is the role of unions to control jobs (i.e. lower productivity), raise wages and limit profits". But the problem with this well-worn view is that such activity costs jobs. In the first half of the 1980s one third of unionised workplaces suffered job losses of 20 per cent or more but one third of non-union factories and offices gained a corresponding increase in jobs.

This union impact is stronger where there is a closed shop (now *de jure* but not necessarily *de facto*, illegal) than where unions are recognised for collective bargaining, but there is no closed shop. In a study of 52 engineering firms it was found that union activity reduces labour productivity substantially in large firms, and that the effect was especially strong in those with a closed shop.

But equally a closed shop has a customary average pay premium of around 10 per cent. Sometimes the figure is much larger, as in the print trades with their pre-entry closed shop. In workplaces with no closed shop and no strike threat the electricians may be hard pressed to maintain their traditional pay advantage.

Not surprisingly, the combination of higher pay and lower productivity results in worse profits. In the private sector in 1984 only a quarter of managers in workplaces where there was a closed shop reported that their financial performance was superior to the average for their industry. But in non-union workplaces 60 per cent of managers reported above average profitability.

These union effects on pay, productivity and profits spill over into jobs. The plain fact is that in the 1980s non-union companies have a better record on maintaining and creating jobs than do unionised companies. And this is not a statistical illusion where industries suffering job losses across the world just happen to be unionised in Britain. The adverse impact on jobs still shows up when controls are made for such factors.

So, many union leaders face a real dilemma. If they persist in their—quite legitimate—pursuit of higher pay, generous manning levels and lower profits, they may have to come to terms with job and membership losses. The electricians, and the engineering leadership, are trying to square this circle by co-operating more with management. The hope and expectation is that the new style deals will deliver higher pay and higher productivity, resulting in expanding companies with good profit and job prospects. It is too early to tell whether they will succeed or how many others will follow.

But unions have more than what Allan Flanders has called a "vested interest" effect. They also wield the sword of justice. Although this is well documented for issues like health and safety, unfair dismissal and redundancy, the unions' egalitarian effect on pay is much less well known.

Workers covered by collective agreements have significantly lower pay dispersion than uncovered workers. Lower paid groups and minorities also gain more from union membership than their opposite numbers. Overall the structure of pay is narrower than it would be in the absence of unions.

The greater equality of pay among union members than non-union members reflects two forces. First, union members are more homogeneous than non-members. Second, union goals play an important part. As early as the beginning of this century, Sidney and Beatrice Webb wrote "one trade union regulation stands out as practically universal, namely the insistence on payments according to the same definite standard, uniform in its application." The continuing dominance of such collective goals—the rate for

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the job—persists to this day in the union sector. Managers in 2,000 workplaces were recently asked to list any factors that had influenced the level of pay in the most recent settlement. Managers in non-union plants were six times more likely to mention merit or individual performance than their counterparts in the union sector.

Lower paid employees or minority groups gain most from union membership. The pay premium for being a union member is higher for women than for men, for blacks than whites, for unskilled than skilled, and for the disabled compared with the able-bodied. Once these discriminated against or less productive groups get under the union umbrella they do better, relative to their non-union counterparts, than do white, male, skilled able-bodied union members relative to their non-union counterparts.

The clearest example of this egalitarian effect comes on race pay differentials (Table 2). For male manual workers in the British labour market, union membership narrows the race wage differential from -19 per cent to -11 per cent for men of West Indian origin and from -19 per cent to -16 per cent for men of Asian origin. But for unions, the labour market would be a more unequal place.

It is an open question whether these egalitarian forces will persist so strongly if the new realists gain the upper hand. The electricians can rightly argue that they opened up some print jobs for blacks and women where these were previously the exclusive preserve of white men. But they are against a national minimum wage because, to be effective, it must narrow differentials. Further, the new-style deals—like that proposed by the Amalgamated Engineering Union for the aborted Ford Plant at Dundee—are more likely to include an element which relates pay to individual performance or local labour market conditions. It may be that such deals mark the thin end of the wedge for the "rate for the job" principle.

Mike Abrahams/Network

Sunrise in London: new industries and working practices have helped the decay of the closed shop

The future of the closed shop is one crucial factor which overhangs much union policy. The institution of the closed shop has been fragile throughout the 1980s and it is now decaying rapidly. A decade ago over five million workers were covered by the closed shop but by 1987 that number had fallen to below three million. The interaction of industrial change, management policy and legislation explains this decline. First, employment has fallen most in older manufacturing industries where closed shops have traditionally been concentrated. Second, many major companies—for example British Telecom in the private sector and British Rail in the public sector—have withdrawn from their previous union membership agreements. Third, this trend to end closed shops has been reinforced by legislation. It is now illegal to dismiss an employee for non-union membership and immunity has been removed from any industrial action designed to create or maintain a closed shop.

As the closed shop withers away the union effect on pay, productivity, profits, jobs and equity may diminish. But such emasculation does not follow automatically. The closed shop may simply have been of symbolic importance—"the last piece of the jig-saw", wrote Stephen Dunn in his book on the closed shop. If that is correct, unions will continue to influence both company performance and to reduce inequality—despite the absence of the closed shop—providing they can maintain their membership. ●

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Table 1: Union activity and labour productivity

	Closed shop	*Union recognition no closed shop*	*Non-union*
Number of Employees (million)			
1978	5.2	7.9	9.1
1987	3.0	7.3	10.8
Labour Productivity			
Engineering firms, union compared with non-union	substantial negative	modest negative	—
Pay			
Premium over non-union (%)	9-14	4-7	—
Profitability			
Establishments reporting above average financial performance %	25	44	60
Employment Change 1980-84			
% of establishments reporting:			
Loss of 20% +	37	27	15
Gain of 20% +	9	18	33

Table 2: Race and pay differentials

	Pay differentials compared with white (%)		
Race	*Non-union Members*	*Union members*	*Average*
West Indian	−19	−11	−14
Asian	−19	−16	−17

Source: Calculated from Blanchflower and Stewart, Trade Unions and Race Wage Differentials, Mimeo, LSE, 1987. Note: Data refer to male manual workers. Other factors that influence pay are controlled for: (e.g.) age, education, type of work (e.g. shift work), plant size.

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Rising tsar

James Stephenson on a whispering campaign against Norman Willis, and the man most likely to replace him

There are 99 motions on the agenda for the TUC's congress in Bournemouth next week. It is almost an invitation to speculate about a missing hundreth. Could it be, "Congress has no confidence in the Norman Willis leadership and urges him to stand down as general secretary of the TUC"?

Dissatisfaction with Willis' performance is certainly rife. In May, Alan Tuffin of the Union of Communication Workers put his head briefly above the parapet to voice the growing concern felt by many in the union movement. He told his conference that any improvement in the unions' lot "will require positive TUC leadership", while tipping the wink to the press that this was intended as a coded attack. He was thus able to scurry for cover when the heat came on.

There is no doubting that the trade union movement is in a parlous state. Affiliated membership fell for the eighth year in a row in 1987. It now stands at 9.1 million. The proportion of members in TUC-affiliated trade unions is now below 90 per cent of all union members. This, even before the 330,000-strong electricians' union is expelled. Less than half the workforce is unionised at all.

Willis could continue to preside over this sorry state of affairs for almost another decade. He does not reach the official TUC retirement age of 65 until 1997. But he is unlikely to hang on that long. After all, he has already been in the job for four years.

To lay all the blame at the door of the general secretary would be unfair. The decline is structural and not to be remedied simply by changing the face at the top. But impatience with Willis' performance is likely to increase the longer he stays on. This restlessness is heightened by the contrast between Willis and his deputy and almost certain successor, John Monks.

In keeping with the tradition of the TUC, the general secretary's deputy remains a relatively shadowy figure. As Monks himself put it in refusing an interview with *NSS*, the TUC has a "tsar" with "an anonymous civil service of which I am the anonymous head".

Where Willis is portly, folksy, a bloke to have a few drinks with, and vague on policy details, Monks is well-built, sharp, the master of his case, and always controlled. It speaks volumes for the contrast between the two men that while anecdotes about Willis are legion, no one could come up with a single story at Monks' expense.

So who is the man waiting in the wings for Norman's final bow?

Monks is a 43-year-old Mancunian, noted for a certain northern chauvinism. He joined the TUC in 1969, having done an economic history degree at Nottingham University and worked for two years in the electronics industry. He is reputed to be extremely hard working—12-hour days are not uncommon. He has been described as dedicated and intellectual, although a newspaper description of him as "brilliant" is widely regarded as more a relative than an absolute term.

TUC

No one could come up with a single story at Monks' expense

Attitudes towards him appear to be universally favourable. "He is generally respected as a very competent official" and a "good machine man", according to a former official in the Commonwealth TUC, based in Congress House. "Nobody ever criticises John's competence," said a research officer for one of the big general unions, where he is regarded as "the ultimate safe pair of hands". Even a spokesman from the electricians' union, the EETPU, was complimentary, calling him "very affable, very likeable and very able—the sort of TUC staff man that they badly need".

This chorus of favourable opinion is perhaps surprising given Monks' career within the TUC. He has been concerned primarily with relations between trade unions, a potential minefield for an ambitious TUC official. He became head of the organisation and industrial relations department in 1977, when his boss, Ken Graham, was appointed to one of the two newly created posts of assistant general secretary. He remained there for ten years before making a quick two-step last year. In May, Monks became an assistant general secretary, and just two months later succeeded Graham as deputy general secretary. The deputy general secretary, especially one as young as Monks, is the clear heir apparent to the general secretary.

With Labour out of power, Monks' department gradually came to supplant the traditional dominance of the economic department. In the absence of beer and sandwiches at No 10, the importance of policy documents diminished. In its place attention focused on the gritty business of inter-union relations, particularly the Bridlington principles.

Monks has been at the heart of a seemingly endless stream of virtually insoluble problems—the Wapping dispute, the employment acts and rows over the old Manpower Services Commission. In May, he was telling hardline seamen's shop stewards that they could not expect industrial action in support of their case from the National Union of Railwaymen or the Transport and General Workers. He is currently involved in trying to patch up a solution to the latest union feud over the Coca-Cola bottling factory at Wakefield.

That he has emerged from all of these wrangles with his reputation unscathed illustrates another quality he seems to possess. It is what one trade unionist called, "the Teflon touch". No dirt appears to stick. Indeed, his role as secretary to the Bridlington disputes committee has been a positive advantage. He has an accurate feel for the state of inter-union relations. More important, he has met all the union district officials who come before the committee with their disputes. As one person put it, "you could drop him in any part of the trade union movement and he would know people."

In keeping with his position as a trade union mandarin, Monks' public utterances have been few and far between. But in May, he did give a taste of his vision of the future, when he addressed the National Graphical Association conference. The trade unions, he said, needed to engage in "a building operation to construct a new basis of unity, to present an outward-looking, caring, relevant movement, not hobbled by an image of being tied to the past, or damaged by an appearance of inter-union dissent". He went on to say that, "Everyone needs to realise that if we are not united in the TUC, we are enfeebled and lose respect. If we are not respected, we are a liability to our friends and pose little threat to our enemies." The problem at least is clearly understood. ●

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Flying Fish and Red Snapper, the perfect complement to a bottle of golden Cockspur Rum.

"When you're dining out in Barbados it's a good idea to sample the local delicacies.

Such as Flying Fish Creole, Kingfish Caprice, Caribbean Lobster, Red Snapper and, of course, golden Cockspur Rum.

Take a measure of pure Cockspur, add ice and a splash of lemonade and you have the perfect before-during-and-after-dinner drink.

As the mellow mixture slips down with the sunset, the conversation mingles with the sound of waves breaking on St. Lawrence Beach.

There's plenty of time to relax and enjoy the unhurried atmosphere.

In fact, by the time your starter arrives you'll probably be just about ready to order another round of golden Cockspur Rum!"

Nello Licorish,
Josef's Restaurant,
St. Lawrence, Christ Church,
Barbados.

If you like drinking you may like the taste of smooth Cockspur Rum.

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Writing to a stranger

A man is hired to give advice to the readers of a newspaper. The job is a circulation stunt and the whole staff consider it a joke...he too considers the job as a joke but after a few months the joke begins to escape him. He sees that the majority of letters are deeply humble pleas for moral and spiritual advice and that they are inarticulate expressions of genuine suffering. He also discovers that his correspondents take him seriously. For the first time in his life he is forced to examine the values whereby he lives."

So wrote American novelist Nathaniel West of his hero Miss Lonelyhearts. Perhaps agony columns are circulation stunts—marketing executives know what people like and the readers of many magazines and newspapers turn first to problem pages. Not only the staff of magazines and newspapers consider agony columns a joke, a lot of people either laugh at them or need to be seen to laugh at them. When I first wrote an advice column, I had no idea of the implications and if there was a joke, it escaped me in a matter of weeks, not months. Sacks full of heartbreak and exploitation aren't the greatest laugh going.

Not only do people laugh at problem pages, many regard the problem page writer—agony aunt as she is familiarly called—as a dumbo, an ageing bimbo, a cosy, fruity, middle-aged lady with mumsy powdered cheeks and naughty but nice attitudes to matters close to the kitchen, boudoir or bedroom. She is thought to have an endless supply of comfy homilies and unbearable platitudes, and a gap where her brain used to be.

"What are the absolutely worst inventions of the 20th century?" wrote Julie Burchill. "Tomahawk, cruise and the boob tube, squats and the agony aunt." Their advice, she went on, is bland, wet and passive. Agony aunts are half-witted harpies who can't write, and worse still are plain.

By getting at the agony aunt, though, attackers are really getting at the people who write to agony aunts. Some problem pages are platitudinous and sickly, it's true, but they are also a forum for speaking the unspeakable and facing up to the emotional and social problems that affect millions of people.

Personal attacks on advice columnists are an occupational hazard. We excite rage from the self-appointed guardians of national morality because we speak of the anguish of sexuality, the dark beast prowling the sub-conscious mind and, in many people's opinion, a beast best left there to prowl. "Do you realise the evil you put forward?" begins a letter sent to me last year. "Tremble and repent, unholy monstrous woman. You defile the country and young virgins. I curse you in God's name and may you go childless all the rest of your days." Variations on this theme came my way regularly during the five years I worked as advice columnist on *Just Seventeen*. I was battered by that vanguard who have hijacked the concept of contemporary morality, the ladies and gentlemen of the backlash.

I also encountered snobbery from a few fellow journalists, who didn't consider an agony aunt as an equal. In the course of a conversation with a high-flying media feminist, I said that some people looked down their noses at me for writing an advice column..."You can't blame them really, can you?" she drawled. A similar reaction came from an erstwhile friend, a teacher. "Are you still writing a teenage advice column or do you ever do anything serious?" he said as he lolled in his chair, smirking pompously. Twenty years on and my biology teacher saw fit to write

I talk to God in my mind. Nobody else will listen

to me: "I was looking through my daughter's magazine. Are you the McFadyean I taught? As your biology teacher I must apologise for leaving you in such darkness..."

Readers were more likely to be appreciative than critical. But not always. "I've just about got to the end of my tether with you. I don't know how you can call yourself an agony aunt when you only answer the questions and problems you understand yourself, which unfortunately seem to be limited. You seem to have led such a narrow life. This is the tenth letter I have written to you and if it doesn't get printed I will write to your manager and ask him to give you the sack. Furious reader." Furious readers were occasionally joined by furious parents: "When I got magazines in the fifties they were clean and romantic. I have glanced through your magazine and read your column—I ask myself, does anyone really write this rubbish? I find it hard even to write the word masturbate. I mean talk about corrupting the youngsters. My daughter asked me what a word meant in one of your letters and I couldn't answer her. I would burn your magazine if I could. I say stick to good clean living and none of this sex rubbish." (She is, of course, one of the reasons teenagers need advice pages.)

Advice columnists expect attacks but something I never got used to were the bizarre reactions of people I met in passing. At a party once, somebody squawked "Melanie's an agony aunty!!" Her announcement was met with howls, ill-suppressed laughter and more squawks. A man then sidled over to where I was sitting in an armchair and draping himself over the arm, he leered at me, one hand on his flies and said, "Help me."

Worse than any of these reactions, are the violent, sexual letters. The nastiest one I ever got was sent to me during my sojourn at the ill-fated *News on Sunday*: "After spanking and caning you I would splay the cheeks of your bottom and give you a very thorough examination probing your tight little arsehole as well as your cunt. Then a long leisurely screw. I bet you're wet now, eh? With love from someone who meets you regularly but you will never guess who."

Victoria Gillick made me just as angry when she dragged agony aunts into her campaign to stop the under-16s getting contraception without parental consent. "When I first started my campaign, the newspapers wheeled out their agony aunts who wrote a lot of sentimental claptrap about young love and the rights of the child." Although her campaign was defeated, those of us who deal in claptrap were left with postbags of letters from girls still unsure about the availability of contraception without parental advice.

And those who think the rights of the child are claptrap should read letters like these: "I feel like committing suicide. Eight months ago I was raped by my father. I did not tell anyone and since it happened I have been wondering in the park..." Another girl wrote: "He hit me and then raped me. I could not face telling the police because my father would be put in jail." Letters describing this kind of hell arrive with every postbag and the agony aunt is often the first person the girl has told.

The very existence of advice columns is an indictment of a repressed, uptight, alienated society—what a world, that people write to strangers with their most des-perate problems. "I lost my job. I don't know where to turn or who to trust. Sometimes I feel like running away or jumping out of the window but I'm not stupid enough although I've tried before. I ache so much inside and I'm desperate to tell someone what's wrong."

"I'm 14, my mum and dad got divorced. We have no money so mum moved into a squat in a red light district. I think she's become a prostitute. It's the only way she can earn money."

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Problem pages are social barometers. Agony aunt Melanie McFadyean on the anxieties and fears of the Thatcher generation

With a few notable exceptions (*Cosmopolitan*, *Company*), the agony column is a service found in magazines and newspapers with a predominantly working-class readership. The snobs and scorners fail to recognise the agony column as an expression of powerlessness in their rush to dismiss it as voyeurism. The advice columnist is very privileged. She is given glimpses into private lives and this can be frightening. Unlike Miss Lonelyhearts, though, who thought the letters were "inarticulate", I was often struck by their vividness. "I talk to God in my mind. Nobody else will listen."

"I've had it with everything, I'm 14 years old and cracking up...I'm up all night crying my bloody eyes out and it's getting worse. I can't go out with boys because I end up spilling my life story and making them feel really moody so I sit in a corner screwed up and cry myself silly until I haven't got any wet stuff left in them."

People always ask advice columnists if they make the letters up, the question being purely rhetorical since they assume you do—you can tell by the look in their eyes. No advice columnist needs to invent letters, so many are sent in (12,000 a year to *Just Seventeen* alone). In addition, the insights and turns of phrase that give the letters their uniqueness, are beyond imitation. "My dad hates me. If there's a speck of dust in my room I have to pay him money." "It's my best friend. I hate her. I found 28 reasons why I hate her and I'm sure I could find many more." "I feel like killing myself, even when I'm asleep." "My mum recently caught me masturbating and she's stopped me watching television." "Us overweight people are not aliens. We can be just as nice to kiss and cuddle, from Lonely Tracy."

The letters are written without self-consciousness. Sometimes, slips of the pen not only say more than the pens that didn't slip, but also lighten the anguished load of the letters. "Can you get pregnant with my pants on?" "Now, even though I'm under the age of reason..." "I'm madly in love with a boy. Nobody seems to understand. My best friend sits next to him and tries to make me jealous. I seem to be going down a drain whole."

Hoaxes also ease the intensity: slander against teachers, names in capitals, details in headlines that *Sun* journalists would be proud of. Sometimes the descriptions were funny, and it was hard to tell whether or not they were hoaxes. For example: "What shall we do? We found the manageress and the chef at the restaurant where we work making love on top of the freezer." I bear the many and often scurrilous hoaxers no ill will. My ill will is reserved for the

Claire Jarrett

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loudmouths and angry pens of those who think their prejudices will save the world and rescue young people from corruption and immorality. No issue elicited more response than homosexuality. The vehemence and anger of the letters I received were a chilling reminder of the power of prejudice. Tellingly, the letters in support of homosexuality were calm, sane and articulate: "We think the human body was given to us so we can do as we please. No one has the right to interfere."

The outraged readers by contrast relied on absolutist arguments about human nature: "Nature gave woman a vagina to receive a man's penis (which nature provided for him), and that occasionally results in conception...if we were intended by nature to choose what we do with our bodies, we all would have each been supplied with a penis and a vagina...try not to insult our collective intelligence further with your loony ideas."

Young people can be forgiven for their prejudices, adults can't. A furious parent sent a long diatribe to anyone he could think of, berating me for supporting gays during the Clause 28 debate. He compared homosexuality with spina bifida and Down's syndrome. He advised gays to accept their "abnormality" and to live with their "disability". But he said they should "only engage in homosexual activity if they really have no alternative". The problem was, he went on, that "people like MM are usually in the far-left section of politics, usually avid and articulate feminists and often lesbians themselves". His advice to me was to grow up and wise up. His final (terrifying) threat was that a copy of the letter would be sent to his MP.

It may be odd to imagine an agony aunt as a subversive rather than a mumsy lady with a twinkle in her eye and a liberal, if limited, outlook on waywardness and wickedness. Yet by being open-minded about the taboos and frailties of human sexuality they do, on occasion, subvert the status quo. This invites fury. Strangely the furious lobby and morality crowd never complained about letters in support of the ANC, the striking NUM, Amnesty International, exploited YTS trainees and similar things. Nor did they ever rise in defence of this beleaguered generation of teenagers. It was only sex that got them going. This, after all, is England.

Mostly, though, the letters I received were a testament to the collective anxieties of the eighties generation. When people ask what most people write about, they rightly assume most are about love and sex. Of 12,000 I counted and categorised in 1986-87, most were about boyfriends, love and sex. Second came careers, third health and fourth self image. But what the letters are really about is a national crisis in self-confidence, the desire of individuals for power over their lives, and a longing for independence in a world which manages by accident, design or ignorance to deny them these things.

In relationships they lacked power—"he said he'd leave me if I didn't have sex with him. I did, and he calls me a slag." Variations on this theme were very common. There were encouraging exceptions—girls recognising they didn't have to meet blackmail of this sort with frightened, reluctant agreement.

The sheer number of letters about careers testifies to a deep anxiety about losing out in the job market. This fear of unemployment also reflects the lack of provision in schools suffering education cuts and the absence of careers guidance. In 1984, readers wanted to be astronauts and surgeons. I noticed in the last year or two ambitions seem to have been tailored to our straitened times, and dreams self-censored.

Letters about work expressed similar feelings of powerlessness in the face of exploitation. Newspaper boys and girls were being sent out on rounds early and late breaking bye-laws

and being paid peanuts. The exploitation was continued into other kinds of work: "I was a successful, innocent teenager until a family friend entered my life. I've always wanted to be a model and he gave me the opportunity as he had modern, photographic equipment." (You can just hear his patter.) He convinced her to remove her top. She complied, "not wishing to risk her career". He blackmailed her—either she had sex with him or he showed the pictures to her parents. He gave her a week to think about it. Another kind of exploitation is described by a factory worker who tried to get out of the factory and into working with children: "I work in a factory cutting polythene, it's so boring." She wanted to work with children and took a job as a live-in mother's help. She was so overworked that she left. She wanted to know what qualifications she could get so she could work with children without being exploited. Her letter ends, "I was told there are no trade unions for people like me." She signed her letter, "Helpless".

People assume health problems among teenagers are confined to acne and menstruation. Most letters about health were connected with vaginal problems—discharges, lumps, itches. The real problem was psychological—they felt uniquely dirty and wouldn't go near a doctor. They blamed themselves and were frightened of that part of their bodies.

"I have a dark moustache. I know it is not abnormal but the people around the district are very immature and call me names like Hitler and Gillete Blue Two."

"I have made love only once because it was in complete darkness and I love the boy. I enjoy sex but cannot come to terms with the embarrassment. I'm ashamed of my body." The desire to conform to the conventions of beauty and excel as a sexually attractive person crippled many a young letter writer. There were too many who turned on themselves in anger and distress, mutilating themselves with cuts and scratches, or starving themselves, bingeing and then sticking their fingers down their throats, or locking themselves in their rooms and crying.

"I often break down in tears when I open a newspaper and see a Page Three girl. I hate going swimming or changing in front of my friends...I feel scared to go out with boys. Please help me before I do something foolish."

The fifth largest category comprised letters about pregnancy, sixth came family problems, seventh worries about school, eighth being gay, ninth the terrifying letters about incest. No less shocking but fewer in number were letters about rape.

How odd that these letters which are such intense expressions of private torment, anguish and grief, are written for publication. They are like sounds penetrating the silence of a forbidden world.

The girls who wrote to me have grown up in the tough Thatcherite eighties. A period during which there has been a constant erosion of the potential for independence, freedom and confidence among young people, particularly in working-class communities. Mrs Thatcher said, "Let our children grow tall, and some taller than others." She meant it. Those who were to grow taller would benefit from her policies. Others simply would not.

Everyone is after the teenagers. The tabloids expose them with headlines like "Gymslip Junkies Sniff Dog Powder Love Potions". They are good copy when they step out of line, and if they don't then it's easy to understand and cash in on their ever changing and impenetrable subcultures. The big companies and financial institutions are after them for the income some have and many don't. Government ministers are after them to curb what latent power they do have, and all of us are after them for their charisma. Every generation of teenagers knows something older people don't, and many things they have chosen to forget. ●

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Swallowing the Sugar

The success of Amstrad is a direct challenge to left thinking on the economy. David Thomas pauses for thought

What Alan Sugar is doing is really rather simple. He is driving down the price of electronic gadgets which at the start of the decade were to be found in only the most well-heeled corporations and research labs. The name "Amstrad" is now synonymous with the word processors and personal computers dotted around Britain's studies and spare bedrooms, including those of many *NSS* readers and writers.

Our mass response to Sugar's marketing skills has made Amstrad one of Europe's fastest growing companies. Unquoted at the start of the 1980s, it is now within sight of annual sales of £1 billion. Sugar's personal fortune has followed suit: worth more than £500 million on paper, he is well up the league of Britain's super-rich.

As Labour starts to put flesh on the scanty bones of its policy review, we might look up from our word processors and ponder the way the Amstrad phenomenon challenges traditional left thinking on the economy.

Consider two points about Amstrad. First, it manufactures, in the traditional sense, almost none of its products. Second, for a company of its size, it employs very few people in Britain—comfortably less than 1,000.

This does not imply that Sugar is simply a middle man, raking off a tidy profit after passing onto the consumer someone else's goods. If it were that easy, we could all be multi-millionaires.

On the contrary, Amstrad is deeply involved in the production of the goods which land up in our living rooms. It is just a different type of production from that which Labour has in mind when it considers its policies for manufacturing. For Amstrad is a company which glories in the modern international division of labour.

This is what Sugar does. He waits until a product shows signs of taking off. He studies existing offerings to see how they can be designed more simply and therefore produced more cheaply. He sends the designs, which may well embody new features invented by Amstrad, to his Hong Kong office, where there is a team of about 70 Hong Kong Chinese engineers, led by just one Brit.

Hong Kong, which will probably have been involved in fax-conducted discussions about the initial designs, takes over. It sub-contracts the manufacturing of Amstrad products all over the Far East, with South Korea, Taiwan and Japan the most favoured locations. Amstrad itself owns only one small plant in the region, a printer facility in Hong Kong.

Many of its sub-contractors have grown prosperous from their long-standing dealings with Amstrad. Yet the company is not passive even with these trusted suppliers. It insists on up to five of its engineers working full-time to monitor quality in a sub-contractor's factory when a new product is introduced. It keeps up this pressure through a team of 20 Hong Kong-based inspectors who are constantly on the road. And Amstrad has full access to the sub-contractors' bill of materials, allowing it to shift its component purchasing around the region whenever it detects cheaper supplies.

Let us now leave the ruthless realism of Amstrad's Far East operations and indulge in a bit of fantasy. Imagine a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed Minister of Industry in a new Labour government. Boasting an Amstrad back home, the minister is keen, in the words of Labour's policy review, to support, sponsor and co-ordinate this growth point of the British electronics industry. So the minister's dutiful civil servants draw up a balance sheet of Amstrad's activities couched in the language of Labour's programme.

On the minus side. Amstrad employs so few people in Britain that it is almost misleading to think of it as a British manufacturer at all. It is really just a "marketing company" (Sugar's own favourite description) for Far Eastern goods.

Amstrad has only one small assembly plant in Britain. Yet the minister will know that the final version of Labour's policy review spelt out the central aim of reviving Britain's electronics industry, in order to deal with the country's spiralling balance of payments problem.

What's more, Sugar is not the sort of employer Labour wants to encourage. He loathes unions. He makes the most outrageous statements, like the one about selling portable nuclear weapons if only there were a market.

On the plus side. Amstrad has driven down prices so far that most of the ordinary folk who have just given Labour a 150-seat majority are proud owners of the company's computers, satellite TV dishes and video recorders.

True, Amstrad doesn't employ that many people in Britain, but many millions of the company's profits are creamed off by the Treasury, a nice little contribution to all those schools Labour is building. And increasingly Amstrad's profits are generated by its fast-growing European sales, just the sort of aggressive drive overseas Labour wants to encourage.

Amstrad's attitude to unions is a little embarrassing and most of the workers in its Far Eastern sub-contractors are low-paid women. But Sugar is no archetypal reactionary old industrialist. The minister will recall that back in 1988 John Lloyd identified Sugar as at the heart of the new "disestablishment" cutting swathes through the country's ruling classes.

An East Ender who left school at 16, Sugar has ignored the conventions of British business, for instance rapidly promoting a Hong Kong Chinese woman who joined Amstrad as a 19 year old secretary to be the company's Far East marketing and sales director.

Putting down the brief, the minister, with a life-long training in spotting compromises, looks up with a smile. This is what we agonised long and hard over in the 1980s—a clear-cut case of the need to reconcile consumer and producer interests. Of course we want our people to keep their cheap gadgets, but we also must build up Britain's technological and industrial base.

The minister, certain that Labour's industrial policies will contain the answer, digs out the checklist so thoughtfully produced by Peter Mandelson, the Minister of Information:

- Offer Amstrad incentives to build factories in Britain? But Sugar has consistently shunned Government hand-outs, even siting his sole British assembly plant in Shoeburyness, an area ineligible for regional grants.
- Help train Amstrad's workers? Sugar doesn't give a damn for the formal qualifications of his key workers.
- Channel funds to Amstrad's research labs? The company doesn't have any.
- Impose quotas on Amstrad's imports from the Far East? Kiss goodbye to our cheap gadgets.
- Take Amstrad into social ownership? Kiss goodbye to Sugar, the company's one real asset.

No, concludes the minister, there is a subtler approach. Leave Sugar alone, but build up Britain's electronic components industry, so that Amstrad can start sourcing more of its components in Britain.

Let's start with semiconductors, the building block of all modern electronics. Labour had correctly indentified Britain's lack of a commodity semiconductor industry—the sort of chips gobbled up by Amstrad's computers—as one of the key weaknesses in Britain's industrial structure.

So the minister commissions a study of how much it would cost for Britain to enter the mass memory chip business, a figure oddly absent from Labour's policy review, no doubt due to some oversight. The civil servants return with their estimate. The minister gulps. But that is another story. ●

David Thomas is a journalist on the Financial Times

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Soccer socialism

Britain's first council-owned football team make their home debut on Saturday. The result could be closer ties between clubs and local communities, says Huw Richards

Halifax Town playing in the Yorkshire and Humberside Cup

Municipal socialism needs all the victories it can get at the moment. So even austere folk inclined to suspect that sport is a cunningly devised opiate for the masses might have cause to celebrate on Saturday when Britain's first council-owned Football League club, Halifax Town, play Burnley in their first home league game of the season.

Innovative forms of ownership rarely start with promising material—remember Tony Benn's ill-fated 1970s co-operatives. This is no exception. Fourth Division Halifax, average gate last season 1,595, is the worst supported club in the League—all too close to a successful Rugby League club and with quick motorway links to the soccer giants of Manchester and Merseyside. Fans have had little to cheer. The season in the early seventies when they nearly won promotion to the Second Division stands as an *annus mirabilis* in an endless tale of struggle. In 67 years they have won the lowest proportion of matches of any current league club.

In desperate financial straits in early 1987, the club appealed to Calderdale Council to bale them out. Councils are to football what the Bank of England is to the City—lender of last resort. If ıl magnates, receivers and the Professional Footballers Association can't find solutions, the council tries to save football for its community. They've tended to act rather like the Bank in the Johnson Matthey crash—hand over money, clear up the debris and offer pointed advice not to do it again before stepping back to let another group of local businessmen try to succeed where similar groups have failed.

That might have happened in Halifax, but for Councillor David Helliwell, deputy leader of the Labour group and a lifelong Town supporter. He persuaded the council to put up £400,000 to clear club debts and buy back the 125-year lease on their ground, The Shay.

The council took a majority shareholding and set up an advisory committee of officers and councillors to supervise the running of the club. Helliwell worked from this base for permanent council control. He'd secured municipalisation of football as local party policy a couple of years earlier—agreed, in classic Labour fashion, by a single vote on a dull evening when everybody assumed the issue was academic.

Helliwell's vision challenges traditional forms and styles of club ownership: "Everyone assumes football clubs have to be run by directors who are local businessmen. Why? The commercial model of clubs run by the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker has been a disaster, even on its own terms—80 of the 92 League clubs are insolvent. Boardrooms are full of chancers and ego-trippers. Why should they alone decide the fate of something with which whole communities identify? All the expertise you need to run a football club exists within a local authority."

Clubs claiming the intense loyalty of their surrounding communities have ignored them except as paying customers. A recent survey of members of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities by the Sir Norman Chester Centre for the Study of Football at Leicester University found only five of the 62 councils considered local clubs were a focus for local communities. Thirty-two said they were largely or totally uninvolved.

"Clubs suddenly discover their communities when they want council help," says Helliwell. He aims to create a new kind of club—democratically run, a focus for local activities and under council ownership.

His success in achieving council control against considerable odds is a formidable demonstration of the political advantages conferred by knowing what you want to do when opponents don't. Labour is two seats short of a majority on the council. Not all the group shared his enthusiasm, while Conservatives and Liberals firmly opposed any extension of council ownership. The local press was hostile, while several observers noted that the rescue and transformation of Halifax Rugby League Club from similar straits in recent years had been accomplished by a local businessman.

The council deadlocked on several occasions. At one stage their shares in the club were put up for sale: "That was a gamble, but I was certain we'd get no realistic offers. The highest bid was £20,000 for a club that had just transferred a player for £135,000, so its liquid assets alone were more than that. Property companies made enquiries but weren't interested when they realised we weren't selling the land," says Helliwell.

Formal takeover during the summer made little difference to the day to day running of the club, council-supervised for the last year. But attitudes have changed—a year ago officials like club chair Rod Thomas, a retired police inspector, invariably described Helliwell as "controversial"—with an implied mixture of wariness and respect. Now he points proudly to the improvements being made at the ground—an improved pitch, better toilets, family and disabled enclosures. A draughty canyon which was never an area of outstanding natural beauty, The Shay is at least clean and tidy for the first time in years. Its capacity of 4,275—up 850 on a year ago, thanks to improvements—should be tested on Saturday while Thomas hopes average gates will nose over 2000: "If we get a decent start crowds should improve."

Helliwell is planning longer-term changes, notably a democratisation that makes positive use of the government-imposed membership scheme: "We've got three directors at the moment and we'll be looking for another four during the year to complete the board, with the aim of getting away from the white male businessmen over the age of 55 who dominate most boards. We'd like to see women and ethnic

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minorities represented. Club members will have the chance to vote for their representatives who will form a majority on the board, retiring by rotation. Never before have supporters controlled a club in this way."

He's realistic enough to accept the possibility that a largely white, male membership may choose directors in their own image, but says: "We've got to start somewhere."

One innovation sacrificed to find the eventual council majority was players becoming council employees. They remain club employees, but Helliwell looks towards the time when contracts will require their involvement in community leisure activities: "We're discussing this with the PFA and we think there is a lot of potential for providing players with experience and training which will be crucial after they retire."

A floodlit all-weather sports area and a running track are planned for The Shay, aimed at broadening community participation as part of the council's overall leisure policy. "We want to get away from the 'keep off the grass' attitude to parks and council facilities. Young people should be able to play sports without having to join expensive private clubs or being restricted to knocking around on recreation grounds," says Helliwell. He argues that community involvement can blunt the brutally direct relationship between playing success and attendances: "Most clubs are unsuccessful most of the time—there are 92 of them and not many trophies. Clubs like Preston and Manchester City have found community involvement just as effective and much more reliable in attracting and holding support."

Finances are currently secure, although players had to be transferred to ensure survival last season: "I doubt there's another Fourth Division club with money in the bank, no debts and no worries about its ground," he says. Club finances will be supervised by the advisory committee, with the wages budget fixed at current levels plus inflation.

What happens at Halifax this season is probably more important to the future of football than what happens at Liverpool

Helliwell hopes to see the club make money, but adds: "I don't rule out putting money into the club. We give £50,000 a year to Opera North in Leeds—I'm all in favour of funding the arts and when you fund a middle-class activity in Leeds how can you refuse a working-class pursuit in your own town?"

So can it be made to work? Leicester sociologist John Williams has studied Halifax for the last year and reckons two factors will be vital.

"How will they define success? Is it as good to be 21st in the league with lots of community involvement as third without it? This will have to be decided. Using any criterion other than results is a major ideological change in football. Playing attitudes tend to be a self-consciously hard-headed professional realism, regarding everything outside the game as a frippery. They'll need someone on the playing side to convince manager, players and fans that community involvement is worthwhile for the club." He believes the former Scottish international Jim McCalliog, now running the club's "Football in the Community" Training Commission scheme, could play a key role.

Williams also believes an artificial playing surface will be vital, provided the league moratorium on plastic pitches ends next year: "If Halifax keep a grass pitch which can't be used extensively for community activities, they'll lay themselves open to accusations of subsidising the small minority who want to watch football. An artificial pitch broadens options enormously—if parents hear from their children that they've been using the Halifax Town pitch for sports or games lessons, community acceptance will be much greater." He points to his survey showing that 83 per cent of Preston supporters prefer their artificial surface (which is far superior to the notorious QPR and Luton pitches and permits continuous use) to grass.

While only Calderdale has gone as far as taking a club over, many other authorities have increased their involvement in football in recent years. Thirty-six of the 62 AMA councils reckon relations with their local clubs have improved, and only one says they have deteriorated. All will doubtless be watching Halifax with interest to see if David Helliwell is right when he says: "What happens at Halifax this season is probably more important to the future of football than what happens at Liverpool." ●

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Silent running

Campaigning politics are going out of style. Broadcasters are the latest group to be put to sleep, says film-maker Marc Karlin

This autumn, after many shock-horror trailers, the government will finally deliver its proposals on the future of broadcasting. What will broadcasters opposed to deregulation be able to do about it? The answer is that it might be too late to do anything at all, as there has been no public campaign on the issue. Just a lot of public hand-wringing.

Broadcasters have been unable to create their own agenda. Instead they have simply *reacted* to government initiatives—albeit sometimes cleverly. Mostly, though, they have been reduced to the kind of impotence summed up by David Elstein, controller of Thames Television in a discussion on broadcasting in *Marxism Today*: "It will be devastating for me if ITV is reduced to merely being a commercial channel; that will be awful—and I wouldn't stay. I think it will be a hard battle to keep the elements of quality within ITV—the way we will find a compromise in this new commercial world is by emphasising high-quality domestic British products, but it will be in a narrower range than hitherto. Our drama will not be as adventurous as it used to be. We will have to play safer; our factual programming will be more populist and less esoteric, and it will be a less interesting place to work—and it might get worse than that."

If this is what David Elstein calls a compromise I would like to know what his definition of capitulation would be. What makes this so depressing is that Elstein was one of the more energetic original campaigners for Channel 4.

Broadcasting clearly cannot be adequately defended by broadcasters alone. Faced with the government's proposed changes, one can almost hear them saying: "We've had our innings, technology has done us in, and there's very little we can do about it."

We have heard by now *ad nauseum* how the proposed deregulation of broadcasting and the marketing of the airwaves will destroy "the best television service in the world". We have been shown examples of deregulated broadcasting from Italy, France and the US. We have been warned that Murdoch's satellite will send to our homes monsters shimmering their decadence and evil in all their 625 lines. But just when we all wanted to know what we could do to stop this invasion, there was a silence.

The broadcasting bill white paper will prompt the usual written and verbal opposition, but like the education bill, the demise of the GLC, the destruction of ILEA, the broadcasting bill will become law—for the simple reason that the very idea of campaigning around an issue of public interest, the NHS notwithstanding, has all but disappeared from the political vocabulary. What's more, defending public broadcasting as an issue of public interest is not that easy any more. Those who, in the name of freedom, wish to extend broadcasting, are, in fact, destroying it; but those who, in the name of freedom, wish to defend public broadcasting, are seen to restrict freedom through wanting to limit the channels of communication.

And yet it is precisely this contradiction which allows the real possibility of campaigning vigorously around an argument that commercial interest alone cannot and never will mean more freedom, and that it is in the public interest that public spaces for free exchange and circulation of ideas should be provided, and that these spaces should be properly financed. The problem with such a campaign is that it would have to stand for values, which those who claim to

Just when we wanted to know what we could do, there was silence

have a hold on the populist pulse, will inevitably deride as elitist and as protecting restrictive practices. Such a campaign would have to demonstrate not only that commercial independence does not mean political independence (and that more channels of communication will mean less to communicate) but that the defence of public broadcasting is indeed in the public interest.

Broadcasters have assumed that the test of whether or not their activities were serving the public interest lay in proving that they always acted politically within the boundaries set by parliamentary democracy, and that culturally and artistically they always remained within the bounds of decency.

The BBC and ITV have acted like a self-appointed clerisy, which, by some weird means of osmosis, could both create and be responsive to the public interest. The fact that "politics" were increasingly moving outside the confines of parliament, that increasingly movements of capital were out of parliament's control, and that even the notion of "national sovereignty" would, by 1992, be an idea for theme parks, merely passed them by.

But it's not just these developments that necessitate a debate on the issue of public interest; it's also the fact that more and more people are now able to make programmes using new technology; that more and more pressure groups, cultural and artistic organisations are pressing for representation. Public broadcasters not only have to defend the notion of public interest, they have to respond to the new demands being made on them. They have to be seen to be acting for the whole nation; not just the nation of ratings. This means there has to be a diversity of opinions, interests and styles—not just one response but many.

The fear is not so much that Murdoch will "steal" a percentage of the audience, but that public broadcasting, as David Elstein's testimony demonstrates, will respond by imitating him.

If public broadcasting is to be defended against the likes of Murdoch, those who oppose him must be able to speak to people who are bored with the manner of speech and the address of politics. One way to do this would be to raise the issue of broadcasting as an issue of environment in the same way that the Greens have done with ecology. The price that one has to pay for democracy is not the acceptance of "junk" as William Rees-Mogg so grandly and stupidly supposes.

We are not all living in Rees-Mogg's silent and dismal apology for a democracy. We can name the values that attach themselves to democracy. We can act. We can speak. We certainly cannot just go on driving and swerving in the tail wind of the cost-accountancy politics of this government. Otherwise we might well all be caught in the dreadful and strange sleep which born-again capitalism induces in all those who try to oppose it.

Last month a film called *Wings of Desire* opened in London. In it, two film-makers disguised as angels survey and interpret the alienated murmerings of the inhabitants of a modern city who are seemingly broken up in pain, incapable of remembering or telling new stories, knowing too much to know anything more. Our two angel film-makers long to be made of human flesh, desire to bleed, love and suffer, and far from loving eternity, want to be of this world—but, being angel film-makers, they spend most of their time observing and witnessing silently. The film reviewers welcomed this film; the beat of the "death wish" and the resulting helplessness was post-modernism incarnate.

Around the time that the film opened, a group of writers associated with Harold Pinter met to discuss possible ways of opposing the government. The howitzers of the populist brigade were duly set up and shot off all their venom at this group for daring to oppose the will of the people. The angels observed but could not help them. The night of post-modernism is really a curtain that we are all busily sewing. ●

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POLITICAL COLUMN

All mod coms

Is the British Communist Party facing up to a future that doesn't need it?

Stephen Howe

The *Morning Star* and Labour's hard left hate it; the *Financial Times*, *Independent* and *Guardian* greet it with something close to enthusiasm, Bryan Gould seems to wish he'd written it. It embraces share ownership, the EC and multilateralism, rejects central economic planning and denies the primacy of class in shaping political choice. Even some of those who drafted it disagree with great chunks of its argument. "It" is, of course, the Communist Party's new discussion document, *Facing up to the Future*, the basis for redrafting the party programme. That programme still keeps the title *The British Road to Socialism*, adopted in 1951, when the first version was endorsed by Stalin and it was even believed (though wrongly) among the faithful that the World's Greatest Philologist had partially drafted it. The continuity thus proclaimed is, to say the least, deceptive. British communism, in any sense that earlier generations of its militants would have recognised it, is dead.

British communists have come a very long way since the 1950s. It has been a journey from unabashed, uncritical Stalinism, through numerous varieties of Eurocommunism, to a pluralist, decentralist social democracy. A voyage, then, away from subservience to what was at best the century's *second* most evil regime, to a thoroughly decent and honourable politics. Yet it has also travelled through schism after schism, ever-dwindling membership, the loss of its industrial base, its newspaper and, above all, its sense of historic destiny, and its self-confidence as a party of the future.

Despite this decline, and despite the relentless elimination of past communist assumptions in *Facing up to the Future*, the vision of reaching out to the truly modern remains one of the few constants in communist belief. Once, this took form in the claim that the world of capitalism was that of the dying, socialism inevitably that of modernity. The working class was the "coming class", the CP "a party of a wholly new type". In 1988 the emphases are very different. Now it is argued that Thatcherism (the enemy is always "Thatcherism", not Conservatism, still less capitalism) has seized control of the idea of the future. The left is trapped in defence of the old, Fordist order. An alternative vision of socialist modernisation is the only hope.

Well, sure, the world changes fast, much of the left is old-fashioned, we have to recognise the power of Thatcherite images of the future...maybe all that can't be said too often. But frankly, Communist discourse does say it too often (worst offender, M.Jacques esq.); a repetitious and often vacuous counterposing of the modern and the traditional as if invoking the terms were all the argument that is needed. *Facing up to the Future* puts some flesh on the bones of that rhetoric, but still exhibits a fixation on the language of "modernisation" This language tries to tempt us into a conceptual bulk-purchase deal, linking technological change, economic organisation, social structure and values in a single package. The tendency to offer such deals has, together with economic determinism, always been marxism's greatest intellectual disability. The new communist draft programme still echoes this original sin. In other ways the remaining echoes of marxism here, though often faint, are more interesting.

The CP has lost, above all, its sense of destiny

The paper is not, as fundamentalists immediately charged, "unmarxist". Hints of ideas drawn from some of the past decade's most interesting marxist thinkers—Alain Lipietz, Nicos Poulantzas, John Roemer, Eric Olin Wright—can be discerned in it, not least in the controversial section redefining and downgrading the significance of class. If the rather hasty formulations there can be built upon, this will start a long overdue application of new, creative marxist theory to practical politics. This is something Labour has never done: "marxism", openly avowed, in Labour has usually meant the most rigid and archaic slogans from Lenin and Trotsky being used as polemical battering rams. Introducing a better marxism into Labour debate may now be the CP's most important role.

But there is irony after irony in the current fate of the CP. Now it celebrates innovation, creativity, style; as against the grey conformity and monolithism of its own past. Yet in the Stalinist years the party and its front organisations provided at least temporary homes for an extraordinary range of Britain's most creative minds: Auden and Spender, MacNeice and MacDiarmid, Haldane and Bernal, Michael Tippett and Henry Moore, Christopher Hill and Edward Thompson. Even the internal life of the party has some remarkable literary monuments: what have Labour or Tory committee rooms produced to set against *The Golden Notebook*, *Grey Granite* or *The Rotten Elements?* Despite the crushing pressures toward orthodoxy of thought and expression exerted from the USSR, the association between communism and the avant garde was immensely strong. Today, when the party should be a far more congenial home for the free creative spirit than it ever was before, there are no such links. The cultural world of British communism is, by comparison with the 1930s or even the 1950s and 1960s, a barren one. *Marxism Today* has shown no interest in literary or artistic innovation.

Something similar may be happening in communist political argument itself. The document notes, and welcomes, the diversification of production, of lifestyles and of taste in the "post-Fordist" era: "Designer labels have replaced mass fashion" (*Really?* For *everyone?*) But if this fragmentation, in which there is a place for every minority taste, is taking place in the market for consumer goods, the implication of the draft of *Facing up to the Future* seems to be that the opposite must happen in the political market. There is no longer room for specialist traders catering to small niches in it: the corner shop run by the old firm of Lenin, Pollitt and Co. must make way for a branch of Antimag Modern Markets plc.

The authors of *Facing up to the Future* have provided one of the most stimulating, fertile arguments about Britain's future to have come from the left in years. It should have real value in sharpening Labour's policy debates—not so much because it is *bolder* in its revisionism than the products of Labour's policy review, as because it is more *thoughtful*. Despite the deep differences of opinion evident among the drafters, they have shown that it *is* possible to produce a statement of real intellectual substance by committee: something none of the Labour policy review groups has managed. One side-effect of their efforts, though, is to write the final obituary for the British communist tradition. On this showing, a "think-tank" of intellectuals associated with the party is a most useful institution; but as a political party the CPGB has absolutely no further reason to exist.

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LETTERS

Fair cop

It seems that the Metropolitan Police only value advice and research when they have to pay for it. You reported ("Picking up The Bill", 19 August) that the Metropolitan Police have commissioned a £120,000 report by Wolff Olins on the public perception of the police and its delivery of services to the public.

In April this year Greater London Action for Race Equality published a report called *Fair Cop* which argued that the Metropolitan Police had approached the issue of racial equality and service delivery in a piecemeal fashion, and that what is needed is a comprehensive strategy to tackle the issue of race equality and service delivery.

Based on two years' research funded by the CRE, the report looks at the Metropolitan Police approach to individual and institutional racism and how it affects the policing of London. The report lays down a framework in which the police could begin to address and positively tackle this issue.

So far the police have shown little interest in doing anything about the report. GLARE has had a single meeting with the commissioner and further requests to discuss the report's detailed recommendations have been refused. The Met clearly feel that this is an area where the police need no guidance and that they very much have the issue under control.

Maybe if the Metropolitan Police had paid £120,000 for *Fair Cop* they might be tackling race equality in police service delivery more seriously than they are.

David Hennings
GLARE

Selling the church

Reading the article on selling the royals ("Loadsamonarchs", 19 August) prompted the thought that, of far greater value to the nation than the privatisation of water or the electricity industry must surely be the privatisation of the Church of England. The government should see this as bringing to an end the church's near-monopolistic position and making it subject to the same market forces which the other firms in religious futures have long had to endure.

And there would be other advantages to us all. The problem of schism would become a local matter; the bishops would no longer sit in the House of Lords as of right, although an occasional bishop may be elevated by merit of influence to sit alongside Lords Jacobvits and Soper.

There is a precedent: Henry the Eighth privatised the established church of his youth and sequestrated their assets. The fact that he set up another, no less monopolistic, is a part of the precedent which need not, on this occasion, be followed.

D M G Wishart
Selly Oak, Birmingham

Dangerous living

Your editorial (19 August) draws attention to the dangers of living in Britain today, yet—despite referring to "travel victims"—continues the failure of the left to even consider one of the major problems facing us.

About 800 people will go to hospital today following road traffic "accidents", and we cope with life in congested and polluted cities using public transport which was utterly deficient well before Mrs Thatcher arrived.

I'm afraid that talking about transport problems requires doing more than moaning about privatisation. The fact is that mass car use inevitably competes to disastrous effect with public transport, entails serious environmental problems, and (unless restrained in a way which is hardly countenanced) major road hazards. Just starting to put this on the agenda and discussing what the problems are means doing more than serving up the kind of whimsy written by Diana Eden (Backchat, 12 August)—we do know that life in London's Underground is unpleasant, after all. It means looking at the kind of power and freedom that some groups of road user have, and at what social cost.

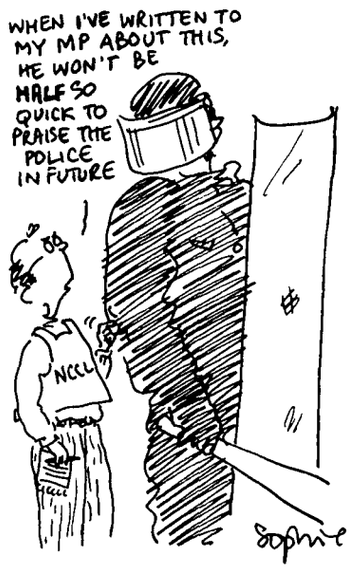
It means discussing the politics of transport. The way people get about is not often questioned, it's just thought of as one of those things. But then that's what ideology is all about.

Bob Davis
London NW10

Building a base

The failings of the NCCL go deeper than Bob Woffinden ("Where was the NCCL?", 19 August) suggests.

Despite some important work, NCCL has failed to develop a political analysis of civil liberties adequate to our times. The classical NCCL definition of civil liberties was fine so long as there was a general consensus that the rights of the individual were to be respected, in principle if not in practice. But it is inadequate in the face of a government and a political culture which has no room for any notion of rights, other than those of the market and the enterprise culture.



Key developments of the past 20 years—state racism, para-military policing, a punitive penal policy, state control of information, the erosion of democracy itself—appear to have passed NCCL by.

I would not underestimate what could have been achieved by NCCL in the face of a government which is not just anti-civil libertarian, but anti-democratic. But instead of spending a disproportionate time in parliamentary lobbying, hoping for a few crumbs of comfort from repressive legislation, NCCL would be better engaged in helping to build a public movement of resistance. (Herein surely lies some of the success of Amnesty International, Greenpeace and others, combined with imaginative and courageous tactics.) The basis for such a movement is surely there, not least in the poll tax issue. It will certainly not be found in the manufacture of a new organisational logo.

Paul Gordon
London N16

Popularising poverty

Malcolm Brynin is right ("False El Dorados", 26 August) when he highlights the difficulties, for CPAG and others in the poverty lobby, of "popularising poverty". The poor do not like to identify themselves as such; the near-poor are trying to get away from poverty as fast as possible: and everyone else can feel that it is nothing to do with them.

So far, so good. But it is harder to follow Brynin when he puts forward an alternative strategy for the poverty lobby, of "popularising the political means through which poverty is eliminated". He seems to be suggesting a combination of exposing "broadly middle-class benefits", by showing the tax rates needed to pay for them, and espousing the integration of the tax and benefits systems.

The first of these tactics is not new; CPAG has, over the years, frequently drawn attention to the double standards inherent in successive governments' treatment of "broadly middle-class benefits"—such as tax allowances and reliefs—compared with their attitudes towards social security benefits. The second is, we think, mistaken; both the government and the Labour party have recently argued cogently—and, CPAG believes, correctly—against tax and benefits integration.

CPAG does not pretend to have all the answers. But we do believe that we must build on—and seek to build up—popular perceptions of alternative values, as well as putting forward practical proposals for change. In particular, the current health debate has strengthened the idea that prevention is better than cure; this must be the basis of any meaningful attack on poverty in the late 20th century—as the campaigns around famine relief versus long-term development in the context of third world poverty have successfully demonstrated.

And opinion polls have shown that two-thirds of the population have grave doubts about both the 1988 budget and the proposed poll tax; this popular unease about measures generally seen as "unfair" must be translated into popular support for a fairer structure of taxation and benefits. It *is* a hard task to "make redistribution acceptable"—but CPAG believes that it is both essential and possible.

Fran Bennett, Director
Child Poverty Action Group

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STAND

Rainbow politics

Sheila Rowbotham

Jesse Jackson is not the first outsider to try for the American Presidency. Back in the 1860s, Victoria Woodhull, feminist, socialist and spiritualist was a candidate. In 1871 she was expelled from the New York section of the First International for the heterodox conviction that the emancipation of women had to precede the emancipation of the working class.

Victoria's amalgam of radical causes was typical of American left politics in the 19th century, before a socialism which prioritised the working class began to overtake these older traditions.

But old habits die hard. During the sixties, when the older marxist and social democratic left in the United States was broken or compromised, the new left emerged out of the civil rights movement like daisies on a bomb site. They emphasised moral vision, community and spirituality and renounced the "labour metaphysic". The energy and creativity released contributed to the movements of blacks, women, gays, lesbians and people with disabilities which have had an international impact in the last 20 years.

The positive impact has been a critique of those forms of socialist unity which submerged the understandings and interests of special groups in a hierarchical party structure, or subordinated all forms of oppression to class. The negative consequence has been a failure to establish a more democratic basis for unity, which could include class. Also a tendency towards fragmentation into specific interest groups, which block efforts to make any overall strategic alliance for fear of losing their political identities.

In Europe the continuation of "old left" politics tempered this process which was more marked in the US. However, in the eighties, with resources scarce and a right-wing national government, radical "Rainbow" alliances began to emerge in local government. These have interesting parallels with the changes in local government in Britain in the first half of the eighties. Indeed some aspects of the GLC's politics were described as "rainbow".

Jesse Jackson's bid for presidency in 1984 made the term a national slogan. By 1988 the Rainbow coalition has begun to become a reality. Though still relatively small and amorphous, for the first time since the days of the New Deal, a nationwide movement which encompasses rural organisations, urban trade unions, community activists and environmentalists has emerged. It also has support from groups of feminists, gays, lesbians, blacks and hispanics who have organised local and state-wide commissions to develop policy.

The fears of millions of Americans about unemployment, lack of medical care, bad housing and education, about crime, drug abuse and AIDS, about peace and their government's support of reactionary regimes has begun to press on the machinery of Democratic Party politics. It is not just Jackson as an individual who is an embarrassment to the establishment; it is the hope he has stirred.

Two dozen Jackson supporters upset the would-be establishment of the Women's Political Caucus at the Democratic Convention this July by protesting at the standing ovation the women gave to pro-contra Lloyd Bentsen. Though the Rainbow expresses a new spirit in US politics there are many factors which could tear it apart.

The cult of personality around Jackson and the inevitable emphasis upon the elections reduces the initiative to build at the base. The Party hierarchy has little time for the Rainbow. There are no guidelines for how grassroots pressure can be maintained within a coalition of interest groups, and gain access to power.

How Jackson himself relates to the Rainbow is another question mark. Rosalyn Baxandall, who is a member of the New York women's commission, stresses that the Rainbow aims to push radical issues into the Jackson campaign. She believes that the support from gays and lesbians has changed Jackson's attitudes.

White gays attended a huge Rainbow meeting in the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem this July along with blacks, hispanics and Puerto Rican community activists. Obie Byng, a black trade unionist who was at the meeting, is profoundly sceptical about the Democratic Party but thinks the Rainbow could be a means of tackling the social problems of the urban areas.

The emergence of a politics which is trying to go beyond specific interests on the basis of unity and equality breaks the pattern set in the seventies which has led to fragmentation. It is much needed in the States and elsewhere. But it is possible to recognise snags like those encountered in radical local government in Britain.

Elaine Scott, a black feminist teacher in a trade union college, is concerned at the rigidity of the categories forming the coalition. In real life people are not simply blacks or lesbians or women but could exist within several oppressive relations and share common needs such as housing, medical care or education. There is a tendency in Rainbow politics to oversimplify political identities and gloss over divergent viewpoints.

The Rainbow's policy commissions go beyond the tradition of protest politics, but in hammering out demands they shed the important understandings of process and the transformation of social relations which were such valuable insights of the new left.

The problems of diversity and alliance, process and policy are crucial. So is the obvious gap in the Rainbow on class and an alternative economic strategy. Though the issues of democracy and need raised by the policy groups are vital they do not tackle the problems of the economy.

Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello argue in the July/August issue of the left-wing *Zeta* magazine that local and state-wide labour and community coalitions are emerging which contest the purposes of production and the false separation between production, communities and the environment.

These point to extended forms of democratic control and a reintegration of social and economic spheres. For example the Naugatuk Valley Project has bargained with corporations on behalf of workers and the community, helped employees buy out a company, set up a loan fund for future buy outs and launched a loan fund for co-operative housing. In Boston, Hartford and other cities coalitions have pushed for companies seeking development rights to contribute to urban social needs.

Some of these coalitions have also sought international links with developing countries and campaigned for "jobs with peace"—a conversion from military production to socially useful products. The labour historian, Staughton Lynd, has called it "reindustrialisation from below", a phrase that echoes Robin Murray's description of the GLC's efforts as "restructuring for labour".

If the Rainbow could combine the differing varieties of democracy and social need and help dispersed economic alternatives to cohere, Jesse Jackson "oddsbreaker and dream maker" could have a meaning beyond America. His optimistic "just because it rains, you don't have to drown", is a good way to approach global crisis. But only if the details of not drowning are thought through. As Elaine Scott puts it, "The Rainbow Coalition is undoubtedly an advance. But it's still not adequate."

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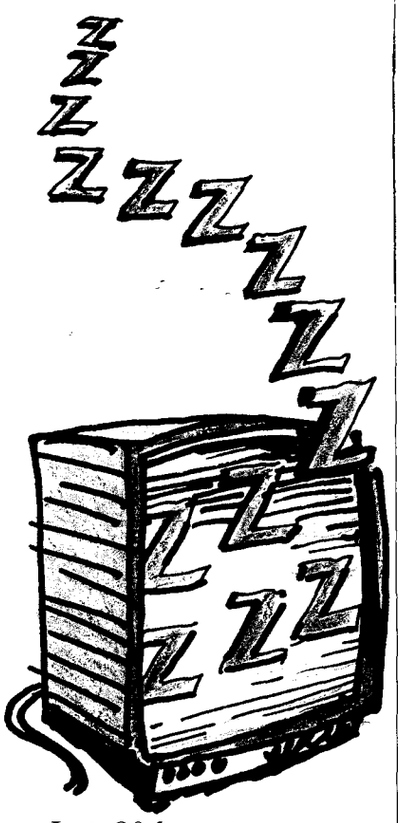
ESSAY

The sleep of reason



Late 20th-century politics has become the art of connecting images to desires—and Ronald Reagan is its greatest exponent. Jay Rosen, professor of journalism at New York University, wonders if a rational politics will ever be possible again.

One evening during the 1984 presidential campaign CBS news showed Ronald Reagan cutting a ribbon at a new nursing home. White House correspondent Lesley Stahl noted in a voice-over that Reagan had tried to cut the budget for nursing homes. Reagan was then shown at a campaign stop visiting the handicapped. Stahl noted that he had tried to cut the budget for the handicapped. The report went on like this for five-and-a-half minutes—a long time in American television—recounting the many discrepancies between what Reagan was saying in his campaign and what he had done as president.

The next day Stahl was nervous about

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going to the White House. She expected some complaints from Reagan's staff. What she got instead was a phone call from a White House aide congratulating her. The aide was pleased—the images of Reagan cutting ribbons and visiting voters would help the campaign. Stahl's remarks about those images were meaningless, he said, the audience would never remember them. The CBS report amounted to a "five-and-a-half-minute campaign ad," said the aide.

Ronald Reagan will soon disappear from the American political scene. But in considering what he has bequeathed to it, this incident should not be forgotten. A large part of the Reagan legacy will have to focus, not on his political programmes, but on his eight-year flight from politics. Other presidents, of course, have attempted to present pleasing pictures of themselves. But it was Reagan and his advisers who made the connection between imagery and desire. To inspire confidence in the president was only part of the function of the images that so concerned the Reagan White House. A deeper effect was to inspire the belief that the world could be arranged as easily as the images. The real genius of the Reagan administration was not its use of imagery, but the incorporation into *policy* of the desire the images aroused—above all, the desire for innocent politics.

What is Star Wars but an innocent solution to the arms race, a projection into the heavens of the desire to be done with negotiations and compromise and peace-building? To believe in Star Wars requires the believer to know nothing about the otherwise obvious paradoxes of the nuclear age, in which a missile defence makes an offensive strike more feasible. To believe in Star Wars is also to believe in the purity of America's motives, its pledge never to use the system offensively. As perhaps the only true believer in his scheme, Reagan exhibited this double innocence: innocent of the knowledge needed to grasp the consequences of his acts, and therefore innocent in his own designs upon the world—a good man, as so many voters seemed to say.

Recent books by former aides confirm in depth what observers have suspected for some time. As president, Reagan dwelt in a world of stories and fanciful themes, undisturbed, as commentators politely put it, by the "details" of problems. In the five years since he announced his Star Wars plan, for example, no one has been able to convince him that the system won't be a shield against all incoming nuclear missiles. It's not that the president still believes in the possibility of a perfect defence while others have grown sceptical. It's that Reagan *believes in belief*, while even his strongest supporters feel the need to modify their views when reality closes in. The heart of the Reagan legacy resides here: in a conception of the president as a man who is in history but exempt from it.

The success Reagan had with this conception cannot be refuted. Few doubt that, were he able to run, he would win in November, even after trading arms for hostages. This leaves George Bush and Michael Dukakis in a quandry. How do they interpret Reagan's success? Was it something only he could have accomplished—Reagan

John Fitzgerald

the ex-actor and "Great Communicator?" Or was it something present in the political environment that Reagan merely discovered?

The Democrat Dukakis has an easier time with the question. He has chosen to run against the rebellion against reality. "After eight years of charisma," he is fond of saying, "it's time for a little competence in the White House." As the smart and articulate governor of a high-tech state, Dukakis is positioned well to restore a concept of the president as a manager of problems. Of course, he may have guessed wrong. After eight years of charisma, competence may be past its time. Crazy as they were, Reagan's fantasies were actually put into practice, most notably in the case of supply-side economics, which promised that big tax cuts would magically produce more government revenue. The spectacle of desire enacted into law has to be disturbing to a manager like Dukakis. It not only saddles him with a huge government deficit, but leaves a political environment unwilling to speak about the measures it will take to reduce it. Again, this is the real Reagan legacy—not the debt, but the will to ignore the debt and the assumption that the president is somehow free to do so.

Vice-president Bush is happy to claim this freedom for himself. He has announced that he will not raise taxes, apparently in the belief that the deficit will go away on its own. But the Bush campaign is founded on a contradiction. The press thinks the problem is how to stress Bush's loyalty to Reagan, while at the same time separating himself from disasters like Iran-Contra. But that is not really it. Bush has emphasised his experience: "Ready to Lead from Day One" is the way his ads put it. As a former congressman, CIA chief, UN ambassador, and Republican party chairman, the claim has some basis. But it has no logic as a campaign theme if Bush is also going to run as the heir to the "Reagan Revolution".

The revolt Reagan led was not a political rebellion, but a rebellion against politics—in particular, against a conception of politics as a solution to problems. Reagan was a transcender of problems, and the solutions he offered were transcendent ones, with Star Wars being the best example. It is not possible to inherit such a philosophy *and* stress your knowledge and experience, for knowledge and experience can only handicap a transcender. Reagan benefited often from what was called a "detached management style". This means he was comfortable with his own ignorance, which made Americans comfortable with the idea of an ignorant—and therefore innocent—president. But Bush will not be able to inherit this appeal, precisely because he has been presented as someone ready to take charge of problems.

The result: Reagan has made it almost impossible for Bush to win. But he also may have made it impossible for Dukakis to govern. A change in administrations will not necessarily bring an end to the strategy of desire Reagan and his advisers formulated. For one thing, long-term problems like the federal deficit, AIDS, third world debt, the deterioration of the ozone layer, acid rain and deforestation are extremely vulnerable to an approach which denies the need to act now in order to prevent disaster later. The mechanism for such a denial is now built into American politics, particularly in the case of the deficit. A candidate who even talks about raising taxes is immediately dismissed as a dreamer, while those who prefer to wish the debt away, like Bush, are perversely regarded as realistic. No doubt the measures it would take to save the earth's atmosphere would be viewed in the same way—pretending there is no problem will be the realist's approach.

What made Reagan so good at this game was his own innocence, a remarkable ability to dwell only in the present. Here, the reliance on imagery was important, for as it is often said, pictures have no tense. Reagan's insight went further, however, to the possibility of a *politics* without tense. Future presidents may not need to be good-looking, ex-actors, smooth and confident in their uses of television. They need only seem at home in an enormous present, where the mounting problems of the globe are just images on another channel. Perhaps the real lesson of the Reagan era is this: there will be no need to master imagery when imagery masters the world.

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Canadian club

A native Indian's 11-year battle against wrongful conviction has dented Canada's reputation for racial tolerance. But Britain could still learn something from Toronto's anti-discrimination strategies, reports Yasmin Alibhai

Inuit children at school in Canada: does discrimination exist?

Everyone in Canada these days is talking fervently about Don Marshall—a young native Indian from a small tribe in Nova Scotia, the sort of fringe person from a non-place who would normally be guaranteed lifelong obscurity. Instead, Marshall has become a protagonist in the kind of event that occasionally rocks an entire country into examining itself.

Marshall was wrongfully convicted of the murder of a black teenager in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and spent 11 years in prison fighting to prove his innocence. He eventually succeeded and a Royal Commission Enquiry currently investigating the implications of the case has found that the local police lied, that witnesses were encouraged to frame Marshall, and that the judge was deeply prejudiced.

This single case has prompted concern that the Canadian criminal justice system (and other institutions) may be operating in a racist way and that this may explain the discrepancies between the representation of "visible" minorities in prison and their proportion in the population. Native Indians in Manitoba, for instance, make up 6 per cent of the population but 54 per cent of the prison population. It is a pattern that is reproduced in every province of Canada except for Quebec.

So, how could this be going on in a country as fair and free as Canada?

Partly because of the established myth about Canada that it is an ever-expanding, delightful, multifarious box of chocolate assortments. It is a myth nourished by the fact that when looking over its shoulder the country can complacently claim never to have had the raw brutality of white American racism. Brixton is also thousands of miles away. As Dan McIntyre from the Race Relations Directorate, a think tank for the provincial government on race relations, says: "This country has a definition of itself based on a strong denial of existing inequalities. It is a defensive attitude. Perhaps you don't get people's attention unless there is a retching searing experience like Brixton."

Mary Bruce, director of the equal opportunity programme for the city of Toronto, believes that this denial creates absurd attitudes. "Here we are," she says, "20 people in these vast office suites doing jobs that don't need doing because discrimination does not exist in Canada."

And yet since the seventies, prompted by the arrival of Ugandan Asian refugees, there has been growing evidence of white resentment directed at the non-white populations. Examples of racially motivated assaults, including knife attacks, are fairly common and there are endless examples of local bigots' brigades, usually the "respectable" members of the community gathering forces to prevent mosques from being built or their neighbourhoods "turning black".

Wilson Head, the black American president of the Urban League, thinks part of the problem lies with the fact that, "Racism is so polite in this country. They don't say 'No Niggers'. They smile, and tell you the house or the job has just gone—sometimes minutes after you phone."

But polite or not, race discrimination, since the Marshall case, is now being assertively challenged in many areas. Policy makers are also beginning to realise that the demographic profile of Canada is changing, and these attitudes cannot be sustained, particularly in the area of employment.

Seventy-five per cent of the workforce in metropolitan areas already consists of women, "visible minorities" and disabled people—groups traditionally discriminated against. The birth rate is barely rising. The country needs immigrants because it is seriously underpopulated. The flow of immigration now is mostly from third world countries.

Mary Bruce is very clear-headed about what is needed. Unlike her counterparts in Britain, she does not recoil from the idea of affirmative action, though she doesn't think it is useful to actually *use* the words. She prefers to say "equal opportunities" deeming it less offensive, more palatable and easier to get away with.

Bruce, like several others in the Ontario employment equality mafia, is a self-confessed strategist. She believes fundamental changes in human behaviour and attitudes cannot be achieved in an ad-hoc way and that the more evangelical the missionaries of change are, the more likely they are to tumble headlong into doing things that, in the end, prove to be damaging to their own cause. "Why not use perfect little male WASPS with cute freckles to occasionally head the equal opportunity programmes?" she asks. "They are sure to gain more ground among the most resistant."

Bruce also thinks equal opportunity programmes should not just address the problems of being dark-skinned, but should examine and aim to correct discrimination based on all other factors, including class, language disability, and recent arrival status, etc. This contrasts with the exclusive approach that tends to be adopted in Britain.

And the package is sold, not on the basis of justice—which is a vaguely romantic concept—or legislative

The message is that good management of human resources includes an ability to implement equal opportunity policies. Mismanaging human resources makes a person a bad manager

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Allan Cash

coercion but in terms of the management of human resources. The message to get across is that the good management of human resources, by definition, includes an appreciation of and an ability to implement equal opportunity policies. And mismanaging human resources makes a person a bad manager.

The city of Toronto's equal opportunity programme is considered to be the most successful in the country, and other cities and provinces have started to base their equality programmes on the Toronto model. Much of the success is attributable to the fact that the programme is so entirely tangible.

It is a simple system. Managers (after suitable training) are asked to produce a goal/timetable package. They are not asked to create false jobs but to assess what their real departmental labour needs are likely to be over a year and how many people from under-represented groups, at what level and salary, they will try to employ by that time. Thus they work to their own target, and not one which is imposed by some race officer from above. Questions can then legitimately be asked if targets are not met and the whole business is conducted in a highly professional way, with proper accreditation given to individuals for performing well in equal opportunity work.

Another interesting development in employment equality in Ontario is the fervent sense of competitiveness over who can come up with the sharpest, most workable ideas and pave the way for change. Fighting discrimination is consequently seen not as a burden but as a challenge. One example is an annual award-giving ceremony attended by 2,000 people where companies vie with each other to win awards for innovations and commitment in the field of equal opportunity.

Different layers of government at local and federal level are getting similarly competitive about their own initiatives. Metro Toronto, the equivalent of the GLC, has developed a unique employment equality training programme for its managers which is famous nationally and is currently being looked at by organisations in Britain. Once again the central ideology is that equal opportunity management is simply good human resource management which makes economic sense.

Trainees—mainly middle managers—are put through five days and nights of a complete role simulation exercise at an imaginary place called Kingswood. They are given roles, names and functions that they work with throughout the exercise. They do not reveal their own identities until the last afternoon. Hidden trainers circulate among the trainees, and throughout the simulation the managers are confronted with a variety of personal challenges on the complexities involved in dealing with discrimination.

The pace is intense and unrelenting. As one participant put it, "It is like being on a roller coaster, the adrenalin is pumping but there is real pleasure with all the terror". Much of the time, says Sylvia Searles, one of the course coordinators, "The participants are trying to cope with their fight or flight instincts." But Searles is not interested in terrorising her trainees. Most managers, she believes, genuinely do not understand how to work with a diverse workforce. They are not all devious closet racists, only people who have developed attitudes over a lifetime through processes that are often outside their control.

This is a completely different approach from that used by racism awareness instructors in Britain where there is much moral bearbaiting generated by individuals intent on persuading whites of their appalling racism. Searles feels this kind of training is over-confrontational and impractical. "Equality is not that simple. There are so many complexities. For example, at Kingswood, we ask trainees to consider a demand for a community centre made by a South Asian group. We have to get the people to analyse the pitfalls of the scheme and to decide, 'Am I bending over backwards or am I being racist?'" But do they not just get platitudes from people who have no intention of changing their behaviour?

Searles believes the intensive nature of the course makes this kind of disengagement impossible. She also feels the better side of human nature should be galvanised by the courses. "People want to be fair. So you show them how to be fair."

It is this kind of positive thinking, many people believe, that is going to provide an effective counterforce to the growing racism in Canada. Canadians, after all, are inordinately proud of their judiciary and section 10 of the Canada Act (1986) which enshrines the principles of human rights and equality in the constitution. The dissonance between these fine words and the racism which the Don Marshall case has thrown up is acting as a powerful catalyst for a radical and serious rethink of the way the country has dealt with the visible minorities in the past. These are important messages coming through at a time when there is a real danger of racism in Canada getting worse. The recent law which tightened up entry for refugees was aimed at non-white refugees and the spectre of Sikhs and Tamils arriving by the boatload was fostered and used by the media and the government to facilitate the law. This from a country that was built by refugees.

One black Canadian, commenting on these changes in attitude, warned: "A system which begins to accept inequality, inconsistencies and inequities for some will find in the end that its most favoured sons will become moral cripples."

Why do Asians drink more?

Community workers in areas of high Asian concentration have found a dramatic increase in the extent of alcoholism among Britain's Asians. These reports have come from two main areas, London and the Midlands.

Raj is 38 years old and drinks nearly two bottles of whisky a day. He is unemployed and spends what little money he has on drink. He came from India to get married. His drink problem got so bad that his wife left him three years ago and now he is homeless, sleeping rough on the streets of Southall, West London.

He is part of a growing number of Asian alcoholics who are turning to drink to cope with the pressures of living in an often hostile, alien environment. As Raj says, "I have no relatives in this country. I am alone, and have nothing but my drink."

Part of the problem is the persistent image of Asians as passive and abstemious, an image which many professionals feel may have left the scale of the problem undetected. Research commissioned by Warwickshire council showed that alcoholism among Asians in that area was on the increase. A study at Birmingham University compared figures for alcohol admissions to mental hospitals in 1971, with the figures from 1981. They found a dramatic increase of 121 per cent in admissions for Indian-born males.

A paper in the *British Medical Journal* as far back as 1984 showed that death from cirrhosis of the liver was twice as common among Asian men as it was among white males.

In Southall, which has one of the largest Asian communities in Britain, staff at the local alcoholics unit at St Bernard's Hospital have also noted the high incidence of alcoholism amongst Asians. Almost 50 per cent of their patients come from the local Asian community. The most common factors mentioned by clients as having contributed to the problem are the pressures of living in a racist environment, bad housing and unemployment. Their problems are made worse because, until recently, there has been no culturally appropriate counselling available in their own language to meet their particular needs.

The Southall Alcohol Advisory Service was set up to meet that need. Aimed directly at Asian alcoholics, workers there report a steadily increasing workload. A similar scheme is also being set up in Birmingham. Naseem Ahmed, the project co-ordinator, and Dr Paramjeet Singh hold counselling sessions with the alcoholics and visit them in their homes.

Ahmed is very concerned at the lack of proper provision in this country for Asian alcoholics. "These people have so far been neglected and it is time that their problems were taken seriously. Deprivation is leading many Asians to use drink as a coping mechanism to deal with these problems. Until these issues are dealt with first, alcoholism among Asians is going to increase."

Vivec Chaudry

Race and Society is edited by Yasmin Alibhai.
Race and Society will next appear in the 7 October issue of New Statesman and Society.

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Workfare: who benefits?

Workfare need not be a mean-spirited right-wing alternative to welfare, says Julian Ives

Leon Williams is a black, left-of-centre American politician, who believes that "Workfare" is a Good Thing. Is he crazy? No. But he believes the Labour Party could easily support his ideas if only it would listen to the arguments.

Workfare is a system that treats the payment of benefits as a loan which can be repaid in kind. If you can't clear the debt in cash, you can work it off at a fixed minimum rate per hour. It sounds mean-spirited and it can work in a mean way. Some American states use welfare recipients as cheap labour to replace public-sector workers and keep down wages—just as opponents of workfare in this country have always maintained. But it doesn't *have* to be like that.

The experience of Leon Williams in San Diego, California, is that compulsion can be a progressive force, not only in workfare schemes but also in training programmes. This seems to be how workfare could be introduced here—despite the insistence of Brian Wolfson, chairman designate of the Training Commission, that, contrary to newspaper reports, compulsory training is off the agenda.

Ella Crisp, who is featured in London Weekend Television's Sunday lunchtime series *Hard Times in the Cities*, was a typical client of the San Diego welfare system. Living with her two sisters and their many children in an overcrowded house in rundown east side of the city, she was content with her welfare cheque plus any odd jobs she could get.

Then the local authorities invited her to enrol in California's new training programme for the unemployed. If she didn't, she would have her benefit reduced by about a third. Ella was reluctant to attend, but she had little choice. "I went because it was mandatory and I was upset for the whole of the first week. But then I realised that what was being taught was interesting and I started to take part and it got better and better."

By the end of the first six months, Ella, who started with no qualifications, had passed her high school diploma, roughly equivalent to five O-levels. Within a year, she had landed a job as a nursing auxiliary, coping with more responsibility and earning more money than she had thought possible.

Leon Williams: Workfare can be a progressive force

The education and training available in California is certainly of a high standard. But important though this is in getting results, it is not what gets clients like Ella through the door day after day. "In my case if the course wasn't mandatory, I don't think I would have got through it. In fact, I know I wouldn't."

This is the "tough-love" message that Leon Williams brought to London last month. Although, as he sees it, there is little tough about it. "I don't see it as compulsion. I go to work and it's a condition of my being paid that I go to work. It's an important part of belonging to society that things are expected of you. That's what gives us a feeling of self-respect and I don't see why people should be treated with any less respect because they're on welfare."

Contrast this with the experience of Peter, from Peckham, who is 25 and has been unemployed for eight years. Peter has found that employers may not have full-time jobs to offer people like him, but they are often willing to offer him a couple of days work a week on a cash-in-hand basis, paying around £15 a day. He knows that if he told social security about this work they'd reduce his benefit or stop it altogether. So he doesn't, and he joins the majority of the unemployed people on his estate in North Peckham who take part in the hidden economy.

But the decision to fiddle the social security system puts Peter on the wrong side of the law. To his way of thinking, he may as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, so he tops up his income with some shoplifting, some burglary and some drug-pushing. None of these activities gives Peter any satisfaction. What he really wants is to be a self-employed carpenter.

Peter is interested in training, and earlier this year he volunteered for the six-month Job Training Scheme course in carpentry. This has suffered from patchiness in the participation of employers. But Peter had the good fortune to be offered the chance of a stint at a top carpentry college.

He looked set to be an inner-city success story. But just one week into the course, Peter simply stopped turning up. No one on the estate saw him for a fortnight. But when he surfaced he had new clothes and some spending money. He had heard that there was cash-in-hand work to be had in the Midlands and had gone for it. Training may be good for your future, but used fivers clearly speak louder.

Peter's circumstances make it more attractive for him to take to crime or the black economy. The challenge for progressive policy-makers is how to change those circumstances so that it makes more

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sense for people like Peter to rejoin the working economy.

The assumption that all we need is a return to full employment is clearly not enough. In the South-East, full employment is more or less what we've got. One doesn't have to believe the government statistics (150,000 vacancies in the region, they claim). One only has to look at the ever-expanding job ads in the London *Evening Standard* or talk to any of the recruitment agencies to prove that it's true. But the problem persists. So even after a return to full employment, we will need something more.

Training people back into jobs is a solution favoured by left and right alike. Generally debate is over the quality of particular government schemes. The government is now launching its latest attempt, the Employment Training programme. Known as ET, it will be the biggest single training scheme yet attempted in this country. It aims to cater for 600,000 unemployed people a year. For months ET has been under attack from sections of the Labour left. They point at the failure of previous government schemes like the Youth Opportunities Programme and the Job Training Scheme to do more than provide a favourable gloss on the unemployment statistics.

There's a lot of truth in this, of course. Lord Young in particular has been very adept at disguising the real level of unemployment. But that should not blind anyone to the need for training schemes.

Like it or not, the new jobs that are being created are often in the service sector and the majority of the unemployed have no skills relevant to this area, so good-quality training is vital.

The best available safeguard of quality is the nagging voice from within that the unions can provide from their reduced, but still significant, position on the Training Commission (the Manpower Services Commission as was). In just that way, the rather sickly Youth Opportunities Programme has been developed through its one-year Youth Training Scheme form into YTS2. There the middle and lower-ability working-class youngsters traditionally excluded by our education system are the focus of two years of vocational education and training. While still far from perfect, YTS2 is now bringing many of these deprived youngsters their first real qualifications, and the chance of playing a proper role in our increasingly knowledge-based economy.

The immediate challenge then is to ensure that the Job Training Scheme evolves through ET, poorly resourced as it is, into a sturdier successor that will provide worthwhile qualifications and a job at the end of it. That task will be tough enough.

However, if the the long-term unemployed are to be re-integrated into the economy, then a second challenge has to be overcome; what to do with those who have adapted to the ways of the hidden economy and do not want orthodox jobs that pay less?

The government's plan for ET does partially address the problem of incentives. Unlike JTS, ET trainees will receive £10 a week on top of their usual benefits, plus a maximum £200 bonus if they complete the course and gain some qualifications.

But Peter earned more than that in a single fortnight in the hidden economy. To match this over a period of six months, the ET bonus would need to be measured in thousands of pounds. Unemployed trainees would have to be paid more than many people in full-time jobs.

This is just not on. We have to accept that the legal world of training cannot compete in cash terms with the fraudulent world of the hidden economy, subsidised as it currently is by the benefit system.

If someone like Peter is to achieve his ambition of escaping the lucrative but demeaning world of petty crime, he will need a new kind of help, and this is where Leon Williams's idea about compulsion come in.

It would be easy to dismiss workfare and its training equivalent as the wilder extremes of American right-wing Republican thinking. But they are not. Leon Williams is one of the many Democrats who support these ideas.

They are also accepted in Sweden, and in this country a small but growing number of left-wing thinkers are beginning to support them too. Among them is Professor Paul Ormerod, director of economics at the Henley Centre for Forecasting, who is also an adviser to the Labour Party. He believes that workfare and compulsory training are not only compatible with socialism, but could be a major boon. "Politically, Labour's benefits policy has always suffered from Conservative attacks on 'scroungers'. Through workfare we could rid the system of those not genuinely in need. The way would then be clear to raise the overall levels of benefits, a traditional Labour goal."

If, as seems to be the case, careful use of compulsion can improve the lives of the deprived, perhaps it is time to abandon our instinctive reaction against it.

Julian Ives produced the first of LWT's three-part series "Hard Times in the Cities", the last of which goes out this Sunday at noon.

Just another brick in the wall

New research suggests that one of the key elements of the government's education strategy has no value other than an ideological one. James Stephenson reports

The Technical Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) is a success, according to the government. Every education authority will be in the scheme when the new academic year begins. But evidence published this week shows that TVEI has not only failed to live up to expectations, it has actually depressed exam results for those children within the pilot.

Considerable political credibility is riding on TVEI. Mrs Thatcher herself announced the scheme in 1982. In response to what she called "growing concern about existing arrangements for technical and vocational education for young pupils expressed over many years", she proposed a "pilot scheme to start in September 1983 for new institutional arrangements for technical and vocational education for 14 to 18 year olds" under the auspices of what was then the Manpower Services Commission.

TVEI would combine a core curriculum of subjects such as English and maths with other optional subjects. These would include biotechnology, electronics, commercial languages, community care, and other subjects with a clear application to the world of work. In addition, subjects of particular local relevance might be included. Provision was made for factory simulations and residential trips.

The pilot initiated the now familiar "categorical funding" method. In other words, authorities only got the money if they did what they were told. But considerable flexibility was given to each authority in the detail of implementation. The core curriculum, for instance, might vary from under a third to 90 per cent of the school timetable.

Initially it had been intended, in Mrs Thatcher's words, that the new scheme would operate "within existing financial resources" and "where possible", in association with local authorities. In fact, David Young, then head of the MSC, soon backed away from the potential conflict with local education authorities that Thatcher's original statement implied.

Nor in practice did the funding for the pilot have to be found within the existing education budget. Two hundred and forty million pounds were made available for the five-year pilot stage. In the years of financial starvation, this money was like manna from heaven for the recipient schools. A further £900 million is being provided for the extension of TVEI over the next ten years.

Built into TVEI was a system of evaluation of the pilot's performance. A Newcastle University study of the second generation of children to pass through the pilot is published this week in the journal *Evaluation and Research in Education.*

Newcastle's study—the second largest in the country—involved 13 schools in local education authorities in the north of England. The study compared the examination performance of TVEI and non-TVEI pupils. It found that "TVEI pupils not only obtained fewer passes but also had lower average grades on examinations they did pass, even after adjusting for ability differences."

Statistical adjustments for other possible factors made no difference to the initial conclusion. The study's authors corrected for the preponderance of boys in TVEI, used an index to reflect differences in deprivation between TVEI and non-TVEI pupils, and compared simply relative performance in vocational subjects. The conclusion that non-TVEI pupils performed better remained unchanged.

More surprisingly, the study found that TVEI appeared to have worsened the motivation of pupils. TVEI pupils, said the report, "were less keen to stay at school after the age of 16 than were non-TVEI pupils".

Several possible explanations are canvassed, such as bugs in the new programme, the lack of cramming, and the unsuitability of the pilot to the exam structure, which has now been changed. But Carol Fitz-Gibbon, one of the report's authors says that on "an impressionistic level, the explanation that the schools accept is the absence of teachers and pupils from the classroom."

Fitz-Gibbon acknowledged that "without a controlled experiment the results are always slightly dubious", and that "the most likely explanation of final difference is that they were

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different initially". However, the results were "incredibly consistent" despite the pilot being implemented in different ways in different schools.

Fitz-Gibbon does not believe that the results can be dismissed as particular to the north. "I don't think that what we've found is a local phenomenon at all. In fact, there's a dearth of contrary evidence," she says. She believes that "if it were possible to contradict our research it would have been contradicted."

A spokesperson for the Training Commission questioned the validity of the study. He said that there was "a good deal of confusion about the figures in the study and indeed whether they showed what they purported to show". This was because in some instances a few of the schools showed improved performance from TVEI pupils compared with their peers. But this does not invalidate the study as a whole.

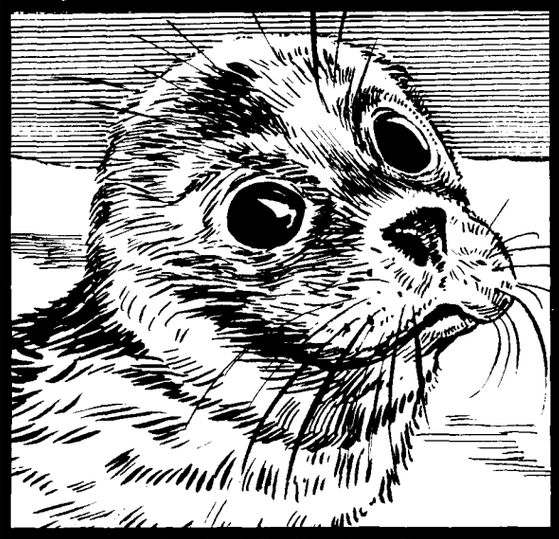
The spokesperson also claimed that "there have been other studies which show that overall the exam results are generally fine, but more important is what it shows about attitude." This claim is difficult to assess since the national information provided to the Training Commission by the National Foundation for Education Research is not published.

Research at Lancaster University —the largest evaluation consortium—bears out part of the Newcastle findings. Dr Murray Saunders, one of the directors of the Lancaster unit, says after "a very crude sift through the data", that "one aspect is confirmed by our study and another isn't. The exam aspect is probably fairly accurate. Our research doesn't confirm the effect on attitude." That study found "quite a marked effect on attitude and motivation".

Switching attention from exam performance to pupils' attitudes is a partial but not a wholly plausible defence. The first aim of the extension of TVEI is that more children are attracted to seek qualifications and skills and then that "more of them achieve these qualifications and skills".

It is difficult to avoid echoing Carol Fitz-Gibbon's question as TVEI steamrollers onward. "Where is the evidence, where is the research that supports that approach—or is it based on ideology?"

GREENPEACE



DYING SEALS

Seals are dying by the thousand on the shores of the North Sea. Now all the common seals in the Wash are at risk.

In order to act to save as many seals as possible, Greenpeace has held an emergency scientific conference.

The scientists confirm the very strong indications that pollution is contributing to the seals' deaths, so Greenpeace has announced it will intervene to block chemical waste pipelines which discharge into the marine environment.

The aim is to oblige governments to drastically cut the amounts of pollution they allow to enter the North Sea.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE URGENTLY NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT.

Please send a personal donation of £12 or a family donation of £17.50. Or more. In return you will receive our quarterly newsletter and campaign updates. Remember, the more you can afford to send us, the more we can do to protect the natural world.

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WELFARE WATCH

Worried about the government's plans for hostel charges? You should be

Only three weeks remain of the two months allowed for comments on the DSS proposal that hostel charges should be met, in most if not all cases, by housing benefit instead of income support. A DSS consultation paper, ineptly entitled *Help with hostel charges*, presents the proposal as a tidying-up exercise, bringing the treatment of hostel-dwellers in line with others in board and lodging accommodation. It says nothing about the scale of the losses that hostel-dwellers would face.

An untypical minority would actually be better off. A hostel-dweller receiving full board now gets only £10.30 income support per week (£11.50 if elderly or disabled) to meet all expenses after paying the hostel charge. The proposed arrangement would give those aged 25 or over at least £33.40 income support. But only part of the hostel charge would be covered by housing benefit, and the crucial question is how much?

For a start, the local authority would have to deduct £12.50 from the housing benefit for the cost of meals. Then there would be a deduction of £4 for heating and lighting and deductions for other services such as room cleaning, for water rates, and for the 20 per cent of general rates that all claimants have to pay. In all, therefore, about £20 of the hostel charge would have to be paid out of the £33.40 income support, leaving about £13 a week for other expenses—which is at least a small improvement over the present allowance of £10.30.

So far, so good. But most hostels do not provide full board, and 28 per cent of hostel-dwellers are under 25 and would not qualify for the full rate of income support. A 24-year-old woman in a hostel providing no meals now gets a meals allowance of £29.40 in addition to the basic £10.30—a cash income of £39.70 after paying the hostel charge. In future she would get income support of only £26.05 (the under-25 rate) and out of this she would not only have to pay for all her meals but also find £6-£7 a week for the part of the hostel charge not covered by housing benefit.

The net result would be a loss of about £20 a week, cutting her disposable income by a half. Someone over 25 in similar circumstances, despite getting the full rate of income support, would still lose about £13. And those in hostels providing breakfast only would lose about £14 a week if under 25 or £7 if older.

In some cases the losses would be bigger still. The DSS admits that hostels "in poor quality property, or in areas where market rents are low" could lose out, because housing benefit would only cover a "reasonable" rent for the accommodation. There could also be substantial deductions from housing benefit where the local authority decided that part of a hostel's charges were for care rather than for accommodation.

The changes are planned for April 1989. The consultation paper talks of transitional protection of losers, but no-one entering a hostel after that date would be protected. There are also proposals for changes in grant aid for hostels, which might help some of the losers but would do nothing to compensate for the loss of meal allowances or for the discrimination against the under-25s.

Action is urgently needed, therefore, to persuade the Department to drop the proposals or at least to postpone them. The official to write to is Ms P Bradshaw, Room 432, New Court, Carey St, London WC2.

Tony Lynes

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INITIATIVES

Bad Karma

Shelley Jofre and Anna Hansell report on the complexities of mental health and Vietnamese refugees

Cliff Harper

Diluted urine is an uncommon beverage in Britain; less so in Vietnam where it's a traditional remedy for physical trauma. That fact was important in the psychiatric treatment of a Vietnamese man who was seen drinking his urine in hospital after he had thrown himself off a balcony. As it happened, the man turned out to be suffering from schizophrenia—but the urine-drinking wasn't the symptom of mental illness so much as an attempted cure.

Again, if a Vietnamese person starts talking of ghosts, is that because of hallucinations or delusions—or because a belief in ghosts is normal among Vietnamese?

The cultural divergence in the understanding of psychiatric illness has proven to be a major problem for the health care of the 20,000 Vietnamese refugees living in Britain, most of whom started their refugee life as boat people. The problem is compounded by the inevitable language difficulties—most of the burden of translation falls on the second-generation refugees: there are very few official Vietnamese interpreters. Then there is the fact that the social stigma attached to mental illness is even greater in the Vietnamese community than in the British one: the Buddhist belief in Karma means that they may see it as the result of evil done in an earlier life.

Dr Mark Blackwell, a research registrar in psychiatry at Guy's Hospital, London, set up the Vietnamese Psychiatric Liaison Project in February 1987. He knows only too well the problems that can be caused by assuming that Western values are universally shared. "I would say to a patient: 'this is happening because of a bad memory from your childhood and that is why you are getting these symptoms today.' But the idea that a physical symptom can be caused by a childhood memory is not something which a Vietnamese patient can easily relate to."

"The idea that a physical symptom can be caused by a childhood memory is not something which a Vietnamese patient can easily relate to"

The project, currently funded jointly by the Kings Fund and the Mental Health Foundation, employs two part-time community mental health workers, Mr Luong and Mrs Huynh. Since one is a man and one a woman; and one is Chinese and the other Vietnamese, they are in a rudimentary way representative of the community as a whole. They have no formal British health care qualifications, but their main asset is an experience of Vietnamese culture which helps them understand the different attitudes towards health and illness in East and West. They provide a community-based psychiatric referral service covering everywhere within the M25. Since the project started they have seen about 75 patients.

The actual prevalence of mental illness among Vietnamese refugees is not yet known, although almost all studies of migrant groups show an increased incidence. And Vietnamese refugees in Britain suffer from a number of stresses which make them prone to mental illness. Unemployment among those of working age runs at around 70 per cent; they mostly live on the worst hard-to-let housing estates in overcrowded conditions; and there are very few professional workers who are Vietnamese themselves. Because of the stigma of mental illness, many of the referrals to the Liaison Project don't take place until the illness is very serious, as in, for example, serious psychoses such as schizophrenia and profound depression.

Dr Blackwell hopes that the project will soon receive "Section 64" funding from the DHSS. This would allow the two workers to become full-time and mean that their services could be called upon by any professional in the psychiatric services or any member of the Vietnamese community.

TAILGUNNER PARKINSON

"I really don't know why I thought I could help Minnie Loveall. Five years ago a probation officer colleague had had a crack at getting her off "the game" and failed abysmally. But then after a couple of chats with Minnie I felt a sense of high therapeutic confidence that should have warned me casework disaster was at hand.

But now, that Tuesday afternoon, she had suddenly and quite unexpectedly decided to obey the second condition of her probation order and report to me. "I had half an hour to kill" she explained, "so I thought I'd say 'Hello'."

"Where are you going when you leave here then?" I asked quite stupidly—for there was no question of her giving up her profession.

"The West End," she said casually as she crossed her legs. I watched her cross her legs and she watched me watching her cross her legs. For a moment I was left with the feeling that briefly, vicariously I'd joined the ranks of her punters.

With me morality always follows such moments; I was tempted to remind her that she was showing a casual and breachable contempt for her probation order. But then I also visualised her reply: "Being a common prostitute isn't the crime of the century: I mean what good does coming to see an old geezer like you do me anyway?" And she'd have had a point. So instead I offered her a fag which she lit as she explained to me that now she'd definitely give up smoking.

"Are you happy with your life, Minnie?"

She laughed. "I earned £250 last night, Mr P, and I've not had to open my legs for the past six months." My querying look led to the explanation for this oddity—"Perversions, you see."

I should not of course have been curious, but she was all too willing to inform: "There's this bloke who gets into a bath and I put a plastic bag over his head and then feed him with a bottle of disinfectant—and it makes him come!"

"Real disinfectant, Minnie?"

"Real, yeah. But most of the time I spend beating old blokes like you and the harder I can give it the more money I get!"

"How do you feel about doing that?"

"It's the only thing in the job that gives work satisfaction Mr P, and the harder I go the more they pay me. The snag is my arms and wrists are pretty weak really. I suppose you don't know somebody who could help me build up my strength do you?"

And the terrible thing was that for a flash of a second I wondered if I did."

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DATABASE

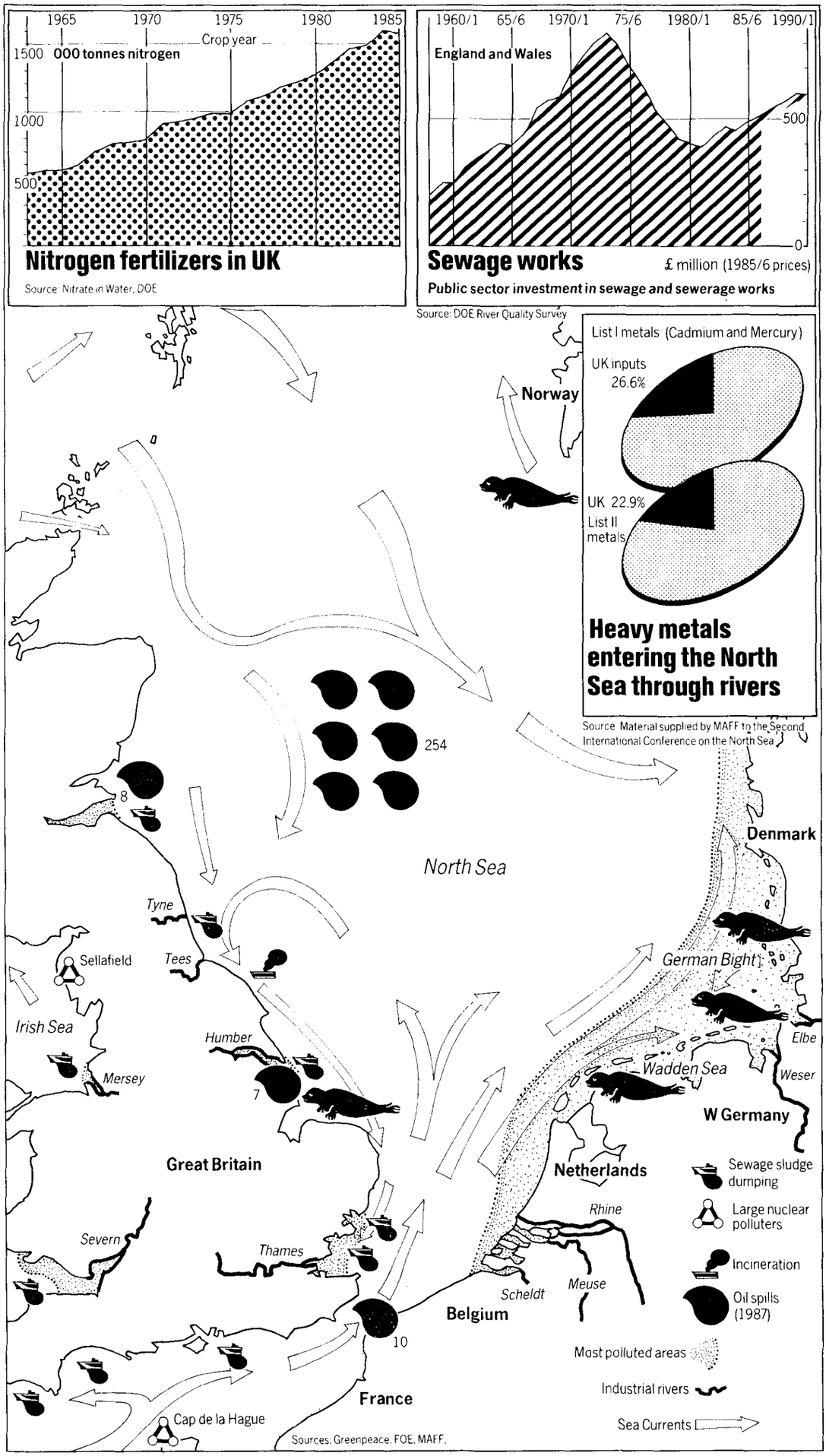
North Sea

Surrounded by seven industrial countries, the North Sea is proving a telling example of the hazards of using coastal waters for waste disposal. Because it is shallow and relatively enclosed, it does not easily flush out what flows in, especially at its eastern edge. The prevailing winds and currents mean that the atmospheric pollution is mainly British, although we have relatively cleaner seas, since most of our pollutants are dissipated by currents. The countries on the eastern seaboard are less lucky —this is the point where three great industrial rivers, the Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt, all converge to spew their particular deadly mixture of sewage, pesticides and industrial waste. And it's here that herpes and picorna viruses have started to wipe out the common seal population.

The atmosphere and rivers together account for about 80 per cent of all the dangerous substances entering the North Sea, but it is the river and dumping routes which produce concentrated effects in a restricted area. In all, some 15 cubic metres of industrial waste plus another 20 million cubic metres of sewage and other domestic waste are discharged into the rivers which feed the North Sea every day. Annually, this produces a total of 73 tonnes of cadmium and mercury plus a further 11 thousand tonnes of copper, lead, zinc, chromium, nickel and arsenic, three tonnes of PCBs, plus just over three of pesticides. Poor-quality effluent from undercapitalised sewage works and more farm pollution, are responsible for the deterioration in British river quality since the 1980s. Fifteen per cent of Britain's sewage still goes through outfall pipes directly into the seas or estuaries, largely untreated.

The North Sea is also used to dump over 3.5 million tonnes of industrial waste a year (after 1989 Britain will be the only nation still dumping) and over 70 million tonnes of dredge spoil and sewage sludge (Britain is the only nation dumping sewage sludge by ship). A further 90,000 tonnes of dangerous waste is incinerated off Scarborough every year.

Add to this the oil spills, which last year increased for the second year running; the radioactive contamination; and the increasing use of nitrogen and phosphorous in fertilizers which add excessive nutrients to the water and cause massive algae blooms one of which devastated Scandinavian fish populations this May—and imagine if you had to swim around in it all day. You might get a virus too. *Vicky Hutchings*



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Saatchi and Thatcher

THE BROTHERS: THE RISE AND RISE OF SAATCHI & SAATCHI
Ivan Fallon
Hutchinson £12.95

Hanif Kureishi

Richard Maris

No doubt about it, Margaret Thatcher and the Saatchi brothers, Charles and Maurice, were born to be together; their ultimate triumphant union in 1979 had something necessary and inevitable about it. Yes, they were made for each other; or, more precisely, they helped to make each other. Politically she is everything they would require; and they are what she must dream of, the enterprise culture made flesh. One day they were two little boys speaking Arabic in a Baghdad suburb and four decades later—after Charles Saatchi had passed through Christ's College in Mrs Thatcher's own Finchley (they are foreign but not too foreign)—they were making an offer of £4 billion for the Midland Bank.

Charles and Maurice were the middle pair of four sons. Their father was a prosperous Iraqi textile merchant who imported cotton and woollen goods from Europe, moving to Britain—Hampstead—in 1946. Ivan Fallon isn't a biographer to forego a banality when it offers itself to him, and as if he were writing a schoolboy's life of Nelson relishes phrases like: "When Charles was growing up, nothing seemed to deflect him from what he wanted"; and, "Maurice was no ordinary 24 year old. It was clear that he was heading straight for the top."

When Charles Saatchi went into advertising it was, as the boys in the agency would say, wide open. Badly organised and unbusinesslike, employing only 15,000 people in 1970 and unconnected to the City of London, advertising was run by soft gentlemen of the old school who didn't understand television. Charles Saatchi understood print and had grown up on TV; he soon gained, as Fallon must tell us, a reputation "as one of the best copywriters in the British advertising industry in the past 25 years".

It is difficult to see exactly how he got this reputation since his ads are of this type: "the most valuable things shoplifters get off with in Selfridges are the girls on the cosmetic counter". But clearly Charles Saatchi did have solid business virtues: incredible ambition, ruthlessness, arrogance, a bad temper and the ability to attach the cachet of others' work to himself. For example, the famous "Pregnant Man" ad for contraception was not actually designed by him but gained Saatchi & Saatchi, just starting out, a reputation for originality and, one of adland's favourite epithets, "creativity".

Unlike Charles, Maurice did go to university, to the London School of Economics, where he studied sociology. He then joined Lindsay Masters and Michael Heseltine's Haymarket Publishing, working as an assistant as they planned *Campaign*, adland's magazine. The crucial thing Maurice Saatchi learned from Heseltine, who ended up with a shareholding in Haymarket worth over £25 million, was that the way to make money was to buy other companies. Heseltine said: "What we did was write a standard letter to the chairman of every publishing house offering to buy them."

Charles Saatchi helped keep *Campaign* supplied with stories and they gave him plenty of coverage. In a way, his real advertising triumph has been the promotion of his own company; when he and Maurice started Saatchi & Saatchi they took a full-page advertisement in the *Sunday Times* with the headline: "Why I think it's time for a new kind of advertising". They were financed by Mary Quant and by Lindsay Masters, who continually denied that he had invested in them.

As they started to flourish, gaining accounts by Maurice's Heseltine-inspired method of approaching companies directly, Tim Bell joined them. Bell was a major element in their success; he was the key to the Tory Party campaign, and to this day is close to Thatcher. A clever, middle class young man of considerable charm, yet chronically insecure (Fallon tells us there were rumours of cocaine), he was the "front" they needed. He did the presentations to clients while Charles Saatchi, moody and easily bored, refused to meet any of them, including Thatcher. While Maurice plotted the future,

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Bell ran the agency. He adored the brothers and called himself "the third brother". "Charles Saatchi was my god," he said.

Saatchi & Saatchi rose without interruption through the seventies and by 1975, when Thatcher became leader of the Conservative Party, they had profits of £190,000. By 1979, partly as a result of Maurice Saatchi's letters—"I am sure this will be the last thing on your mind, but I wondered if you felt it would make sense to dispose of your company"—they were Britain's biggest ad agency. Profits: £2.4 million.

By the early eighties they were ready to break into the rest of Europe and the United States, something it was said that British companies couldn't do. But in 1983 an article written by Theodore Levitt in the *Harvard Business Review* encapsulated and inspired Maurice's thinking. The idea was that companies should no longer be multinationals, customising products to different markets around the world, but should act "globally", selling exactly the same drinks, jeans and radios in every country. Regional and national differences were out. Advertising would follow suit. So the Saatchi's British Airways commercials were shown in 25 countries at the same time. "Globalisation" was the future. Yes, the world was shrinking; it was also getting smaller in another sense.

Sir John King, the chairman of British Airways who hired Saatchi & Saatchi, was appointed by Thatcher, and there was much the Prime Minister had to be grateful to the Saatchis for.

Gordon Reece was director of communications at Conservative central office. He had encouraged Thatcher to relax in front of television cameras; he taught her to slow down and speak deliberately. It was he who brought in the Saatchis and Bell for the 1979 election. For them it was primarily a prestige job since Alastair McAlpine told them the party couldn't afford to pay them for a year. It wasn't the Saatchis who restyled Thatcher—it was Reece who made her a human, caring figure—but among other things they did come up with the "Labour Isn't Working" ad and she won the election.

By 1983 this kind of high-profile and abusive ad campaign, researched by Bell in the United States, had become part of British politics. Bell called the 1983 ads "the greatest political ads ever seen in this country" and they included the one which compared the manifesto of the Communist Party to that of the Labour Party, saying: "Like your manifesto, comrade".

That Christmas Tim Bell was a guest at Chequers and in 1984 he assisted Ian McGregor during the miners' strike. He had done an enormous amount for the Saatchis but as with the Corleone family in *The Godfather,* no one ever got too close; no one was indispensable. He would never become a brother — Charles and Maurice wanted to replace our Leader's advisor with David Puttnam. Bell was out; politically astute but humanly lacking, all he could say was: "Maybe they never, ever like me."

But one person did like him and did continue to need him—Thatcher—despite the fact he was rude about her son in public when a journalist was listening.

Looking back, it is hard to see why the 1987 election was so nerve-racking for the Tories. Fallon's account includes much farce. There was Thatcher's raging toothache and fear she might lose the election; Tebbit was in pain from the Brighton wound; and there was the trusty Tim Bell concealed in a side room away from Tebbit and Maurice Saatchi who'd both fallen out with him; finally there was Cecil Parkinson surreptitiously advising "in exile" from another room. The ads included the one with three red books on it with the titles: "Young, Gay and Proud", "Police: Out of School!" and "The Playbook for Kids about Sex", all under the headline, "Is this Labour's idea of a Comprehensive Education?"

The Saatchi art gallery in London is located behind a grey door at 98a Boundary Road, NW8, and is open to the public on Fridays and Saturdays, 12 to 6 pm. It is never advertised and information is difficult to come by. Ultimately, though, it is the public which has paid for this art collection; the cost of advertising is added to every product the public buys. It is therefore the public which has paid for the eerie and dangerous power that Charles and Maurice have acquired: political power through their connection with Thatcher and the fact they can assist any western political party that asks them; economic power, of course, through their purchasing of companies and banks; and now cultural power not only in the art market but through Maurice Saatchi's wife, Josephine Hart, who has a theatrical production company.

Despite Fallon's colourless prose, the Saatchi story is a riveting one. It's a shame our leading novelists are incapable of dealing with such grand hucksters but have to enthrall us with accounts of spinsterhood, the problems of child-rearing and what it is to have a shrivelled liver. In Fallon's subservient but detailed account there is barely a critical or analytical word; he can't use the word "disinterested" correctly (he is deputy editor of the *Sunday Times*), let alone ask questions about the real nature of the Saatchi contribution to British life and the massive personal wealth these shallow, greedy self-seekers have accumulated. But the overwhelming impression one is left with is that these are truly Thatcher's children; without dimension, mystery or inwardness, they are an appropriate monument to our age.

Dear diary

RECORDING ANGELS: THE SECRET WORLD OF WOMEN'S DIARIES
Sarah Gristwood
Harrap £12.95

Patricia Craig

Recording Angels opens on a note of frivolity, turns progressively serious with its considerations of work, war and so forth, and ends in a state of positive gloom: "Despair" is the title of the penultimate chapter. The editor's commentary, on the other hand, remains bubbly throughout. The book is made up of diary extracts assembled under various headings: the views of women on the spot, in a stew or merely under the weather. The scope is enormous, and the effect correspondingly patchy—a soupçon of 16th century housekeeping, a dash of introspection from the present: "I expected to look old and hollow and gray, but I guess it's only me on the inside that has shrivelled and deteriorated."

The diary as a literary form, Sarah Gristwood notes, has something of ambivalence about it, being public and private at the same time. Why do people feel a need to record their reflections, and their doings? The reasons proffered aren't infrequently banal: "I want to bring out all kinds of things that lie buried deep in my heart."

Some diarists have had celebrity thrust upon them—posthumously, like Ann Frank; or in an access of prurience, as with the actress Mary Astor. Some are famous for having expressed the mood of an era (Vera Brittain comes to mind). Some exhibit an undue self-regard, like Anais Nin, or show themselves to lack the resource of self-mockery (Nin again, and nearly everyone quoted here in the grip of dejection).

Christine Roche

Actually, the most effective diaries contain an element of artifice, like E.M.Delafield's "Provincial Lady" sequence, which doesn't qualify for inclusion here as it was issued in the guise of fiction; or (on a more serious level) reflect some unique endowment on the part of the author, as in the case of Virginia Woolf.

Sarah Gristwood doesn't distinguish between the diaries that stand up as literature (Woolf, Naomi Mitchison, Frances Partridge and so on) and those whose interest lies in some other area: any competent account of day-to-day activity will acquire a sociological value in due course, and a particular pungency if it's set in a time of crisis, like world war two. If you go back far enough you can't avoid the charm of idiosyncrasy, whether of spelling ("till supper time I was busie in the granerie and after supper and praiers I went to bedd") or style: "I was quite Philosophical," writes a Georgian young lady with regard to her apprehension of the shortness of life, "and mean to remain it."

A lot of diarists, those most in earnest and the

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very young and artless ("I'm so scared and so cold and so alone...I have only you, Diary"), leave themselves fearfully exposed and cause embarrassment in the reader. There is rather too much of this sort of thing in *Recording Angels*, along with Victorian morbidity and effusions of the more recent past ("Just about the most ghastly, hideous thing ever has happened—President Kennedy has been assassinated").

What else? We may note the extraordinary industry of Hannah Cullwick in the 1860s, who not only carries out the innumerable chores of a domestic servant, but then sits down with pen and paper to re-enact the whole performance. Queen Victoria gets a look-in here and there, for example in the section entitled "Love" ("Love is the great leveller," observes the compiler), which includes her remarks on Albert's attractiveness as he "gallops and valses". Elsewhere, we find rude assessments of the inadequate moral nature of the Swiss, disappointment in the face of sexual intercourse ("if that's really all there is to it I'd rather have a good smoke or go to the pictures"), and bitterness and vindictiveness in excess of its object (the dutiful behaviour of Sylvia Plath's mother towards her children).

The editor, in her selections and accompanying comments, communicates a considerable relish for "the big, basic questions" (as she puts it), and individuals' ways of getting to grips with them. She isn't at all abashed by bathos, as we see in the following pronouncement on Mary Shelley (whose laconic style gave way to prolixity after her husband's death): "It is as if, with the poet's drowning, a true diarist was born."

Under eastern eyes

EUROPE RECONSIDERED: PERCEPTIONS OF THE WEST IN 19TH CENTURY BENGAL
Tapan Raychaudhuri
Oxford University Press £12

Bhikhu Parekh

For over 150 years Indians have been desperately trying to make some sense of what the British rule did and meant to them. The task has not been easy. The ways in which one civilisation receives another, defines itself and is defined by the other, integrates these two sometimes incompatible definitions and selects and mobilises its resources are all extremely complex questions which we have only just begun to ask.

Indians felt the British presence at three levels. First, the British rule introduced institutions, to which they found only a few parallels in their history. For years they could only make limited sense of private property and had great difficulty coming to terms with the modern state, whose impersonality, quasi-religious attachment to territorial integrity and transcendence of society continue to puzzle them.

Secondly, the British brought new ideas and ideologies, only some of which were familiar to the Indians. They knew freedom but not liberty, fairness but not justice, unity of man but not equality of men, familial love but not fraternity, individuality but not individualism. Such ideologies as liberalism, socialism and communism, which presupposed the relatively autonomous institutions of the state and the economy, were also new to them.

Finally, the British brought new forms of knowledge, some of which unsettled their subjects. Indians were long familiar with philosophy but could not see the point of theology. Modern science was relatively, but not totally, unfamiliar to them. The modern historical form of understanding caused then the greatest difficulty.

For the Hindus the past was an integral part of the present, a living reality to be constantly reinterpreted to illuminate the present and used as a source of inspiration and example. The idea of a dead and autonomous past to be explored for its own sake seemed to them a vulgar piece of necrophilia, an unnecessary waste of the past, a senseless attempt to eviscerate and impoverish the present, and/or a dangerous violation of a society's right to invent pleasant and necessary myths. Not surprisingly, almost every 19th century Indian leader felt nervous about history.

The overall British impact on India was truly revolutionary and felt most acutely in Bengal, where the roots of classical Hinduism were relatively weak and the Brahmanic caste less self-confident. The Bengalis were constantly told by the British that their habits of thought, ways of life, religion and social structure were all primitive and uncivilised and in need of a radical overhaul. For the first time in their history their intellectuals had to define and defend themselves and encapsulate their rich and complex civilisation into a neat formula. They could not define themselves without distinguishing themselves from, and thus defining, their masters. Even as the orientalists invented the east, the orientals invented the west. The east was not the only one to suffer from the orientalist hubris.

After a good deal of debate the Bengalis concluded that theirs was a spiritual or religious, and the British a materialist, civilisation. Each had its characteristic strengths and weaknesses and had a good deal to learn from the other. India's salvation lay in evolving a synthesis of the two. The search for synthesis called for a wider framework within which to locate and compare the two. Not surprisingly, the Bengalis were one of the first to develop comparative studies of religion, history and literature and to raise the problem of relativism.

Tapan Raychaudhuri's book is a study of the contributions to this debate of Bengal's three most influential writers, namely Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Bankim Chatterjee and Swami Vivekananda. He skilfully analyses the way each defined, distinguished, criticised and synthesised the Indian and European civilisations. As he shows, the early Bankim was the most original and perceptive of the three. Unlike Bhudev's defiant traditionalism and Vivekananda's diffident rationalism, his analysis of the situation was closer to reality and his synthesis genuine.

Raychaudhuri is a good historian with a keen eye for detail, and he vividly brings out the fascinating and at times amusing preoccupations of the three writers. Though his book is limited in scope and avoids large philosophical issues as well as being at times unhistorical, it fills a gap in the exiguous literature on the subject.

An appalling mother

NOTHING TO FORGIVE: A DAUGHTER'S LIFE OF ANTONIA WHITE
Lyndall P. Hopkinson
Chatto & Windus £12.95

Fleur Adcock

Even after her death (in 1980) Antonia White is a focus for trouble. The author of *Frost in May* and three other more or less autobiographical novels survived three marriages (two of them unconsummated), numerous doomed love affairs, two abortions and two periods of insanity. She also had two daughters (neither conceived within marriage) by two different fathers. Lyndall Hopkinson's biography has sprung into the world unheralded (through fear of legal action) three years after a memoir by her half-sister Susan Chitty which was stormily received.

It is easy enough to understand the resentments White aroused, but less easy to be convinced of her charm. She may have been good company in her lifetime (there are several testimonies to her sense of humour), but she is decidely not much fun to read about. She terrorised, neglected and manipulated her children, behaved unpredictably to everyone else, agonised over her "writers block" and over religion, fell for suspect gurus while zigzagging to and from Catholicism, told lies, was constantly in debt and indulged ad nauseam in self-analysis.

Most of her lovers were outrageously unsuitable—unbalanced, sadistic or impossibly young: in her late thirties she pursued the 19 year old poet David Gascoyne (who was gay), and then settled for simultaneous affairs with a lad of 20 and his not-much-older brother. She seems in any case not to have enjoyed sex much: "I only want to be someone's adored pet," she once said; and, on another occasion, "Yes, I have a torturer's nature. And yet the person I torture most is myself." She was capable of occasional tenderness, but only to those who were in distress (a state she had often brought about herself). Lyndall's only pleasant childhood memory of her mother was being nursed through tonsilitis.

The positive thing to be said in Antonia White's favour is that throughout her life she supported herself by her work (journalism, advertising and a quantity of translations from the French). The mitigating circumstance is her constant battle to stay sane. But (unless you can accept her supporters' view that being an ap-

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palling mother was just a minor failing like being careless with money) the big black mark against her is what she did to her daughters.

Comparisons between their two versions of her life are inevitable. Both draw on her private notebooks. Lyndall Hopkinson's book is longer (sometimes at the expense of clarity) and more earnest than her sister's slickly witty, often flippant narrative; it covers more ground (unlike Susan she did not break off relations with her mother, though she did flee to live in Italy) and it names more names: for example, Frances Grigson, with whom Tom Hopkinson was in love during his marriage to Antonia, appeared in Chitty's book as "Kay".

More detail, though, is not necessarily a bonus: there's a limit to the amount of pleasure that can be derived from reading about the convoluted and tortuous relationships between so many not immediately appealing people. Damaged psyches make exhausting company.

There are still some discrepancies to be resolved. Was it, for instance, Carmen Callil (on a regular visit) or Lyndall Hopkinson (acting on a telepathic message) who found the aged and paralysed Antonia dumped alone in her flat by ambulance men and saved her life? Perhaps Ms Callil will tell us. But aside from a mild curiosity over such little mysteries, I for one have no wish to learn any more about Antonia White. If this is the "sympathetic" biography, we have no need of a hostile one.

Rage against whites

BEHIND THE FRONTLINES
Ferdinand Dennis
Gollancz £12.95

James Campbell

One night last winter I was attacked in the street by a black teenager. He didn't want my money—in fact, he was in distress and I had offered my help. He swung a couple of wild punches and screamed through tears that no white person should ever come near him. I don't know what the immediate trouble was and I never saw him again, but Ferdinand Dennis seems to have met his mother, father, brothers and sisters, and an array of cousins from Birmingham to Bath.

In *Behind the Frontlines*, an account of a journey round the "Afro-Saxon" communities of England and Wales, Dennis talks to people who preach the Bible, sing, play pool, sell ganja, all to survive—not only in the material sense, but to avoid what has been for many black immigrants and their children the final destination of the final passage: prison or the madhouse. Only once or twice in this book does violence actually come to the surface, but its presence—more often inwardly than outwardly directed—is felt on every other page: "Black self-realisation so easily becomes snared in yesterday's humiliations, yesterday's shame. The resultant anger is sometimes immensely creative. But it can also swiftly progress to an uncontainable rage against all whites."

Dennis's first stop is Liverpool, because it was the main English slave port in the 18th and early 19th centuries, and because he believes, rightly, that most white Britons are scantily acquainted with that chapter of their history. From there he proceeds to Sheffield, Birmingham, Cardiff, Bath—where Haile Selassie lived in exile during the 1930s—Bristol and Brixton. Apart from the irrepressible presence of the white woman, black and white communities in these cities live in worlds apart.

Dennis is an unpretentious guide through this terrain, and though his book is plainly written it is not dull. His theorising is based not on ideology but on perception, and, having a good eye for self-deception and self-righteousness, he is not easily taken in. On the frontline in Birmingham, a man suggests that the 1985 riots were a direct reaction to the sight of "brutal pictures" from South Africa. "I thought the 1985 riots were about the way the police were behaving in Handsworth," says Dennis, though he forebears to challenge the facile politicisation more strongly.

Dennis's method is to present and occasionally to hint, but in general he treats his subjects, youthful or aged, militant or defeated, with respect. His sympathy at last is with his black British compatriots, and he conveys well their sense of rejection by "a Britishness which excludes blacks" and their retreat into "a blackness which rejects Britain".

Sun, sex and art

THE DURRELL-MILLER LETTERS, 1935-80
Ian S. MacNiven (editor)
Faber £17.50

Philip Oakes

This is a fat book which could have been fatter, a mere 210,000 words distilled from a million word correspondence spanning 45 years. It begins in 1935 when Lawrence Durrell, then aged 23 and living with his family in Corfu, came by chance on Henry Miller's novel, *Tropic of Cancer*. As Durrell tells it (his accounts vary), the book had been discarded, presumably by an outraged tourist, in a public toilet. "It strikes me as being the only man-sized piece of work which this century can really boast of," he told the author. Well said. Brooklyn-born Miller, 43 and living in Paris to dodge alimony payments, recognised a disciple and replied in kind: "You're the first Britisher who's written me an intelligent letter about the book." The friendship burgeoned, the dialogue deepened and came to an end only with Miller's death in 1980.

Much of it, even at its most uninhibited, was clearly a rehearsal for public print. What started out as fan mail became an exhilarating exchange of ideas, with the pupil-teacher relationship frequently going into reverse (most markedly after the publication of Durrell's *The Black Book*), each taking turns to chivy or exhort the other, and though the affection is overwhelming the audience is never entirely out of mind.

Many of the letters are in fact, draft essays (on *Hamlet*, on poetry, on painting) and carbons were kept. Even during the war years when Miller was gypsing across America and Durrell was toiling miserably as a government propagandist in the Middle East, each made strenuous efforts to preserve the letters which winged between them. What they comprise is a unique record of a friendship and a literary progression—too anarchic to be called a movement—which rollicked on quite independently of what was happening in world *salons* where reputations were fostered by patronage or whatever was politically chic.

As self-described outlaws both Miller and Durrell found Marxism repugnant. For them the thirties passed in a dazzle of sun, sex and art. Durrell reviles Middleton Murry ("that slimy little Jesus") and mildly defends George Orwell ("a nice chap, but ignorant"). Miller writes begging letters when funds are low but turns down assistance from Ezra Pound, "who sends word that I could be taken care of *if* I would sort of swing a bat for his crazy Social Credit ideas." Both realise that war is on the way, but apart from making vague plans to flee Europe, neither shows any real understanding of what's in store. "While things are going to pot the jackals must reign," writes Miller in March 1939. "Hitler is no worse, nay better, in my opinion, than the other lugs."

Durrell's view of international affairs darkened perceptibly after the war. He had an especially grim time in Belgrade in 1949 ("this filthy, echoing, rambling town, full of sodden Serbs") but his fortunes were about to mend. Miller had already enjoyed the bizarre experience of finding himself a millionaire, albeit briefly—in francs which he was unable to take out of France—when GIs in Paris made *Tropic* a bestseller. But celebrity descended on both of them in the 1950s when Durrell completed *The Alexandria Quartet* and Miller's backlog of titles finally beat their way past the censor.

It was by any standard a considerable success story and what makes it more agreeable than most is that it was not only deserved but largely disregarded by its recipients. Neither goes in for grandstanding. The punditry remains low-key. The money, when it rolls in, is spent enjoyably. The sex continues (Miller is still joyfully at it in his eighties; Durrell less so at 67). And, above all, the work goes on.

I doubt whether anyone today has the gusto, patience, or inclination to embark on a correspondence like this and more's the pity. The letters are funny, wise and energising. They explain a creative process and they are literature in themselves. After nearly half a century the names of the addressees hardly matter. They are addressed to the world and we are lucky to receive them.

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Evacuee blues

NO TIME TO WAVE GOODBYE
Ben Wicks
Bloomsbury £13.95

Joy Melville

Crocodiles of evacuee children—name-tagged like parcels, gasmasks hanging from string around their necks, responding to teachers' shouts of "Are We Downhearted?" with louder shouts of "No"—marched towards the main British railway stations two days before world war two began. When the Battle of Britain started, their numbers swelled to three and a half million.

It was a time of tearful parents, bewildered children. One child, asking why all the people were standing in their gardens, waving, was told by another, "They feel sorry for us. Try to cry, to make it worth while."

Teachers shared in the drama, as the government had decided that children should be evacuated with their schools. One recalled the journey out of London with horror: "Each of the children, apart from their pathetic bundles, had a large carrier-bag and in that was their iron rations. They included a tin of bully beef and a tin of pears. We were in the carriage for four and a half hours during which time the kids all ate their pears and were sick."

Reality hit the children when they arrived at their destination. Lines of them walking through village streets were a common sight, as billeting officers or teachers tried to find someone willing to take them. One woman remembers being marched off to the high street, "where the locals stood and selected one or two children at random. The pretty and attractive ones went first and I thought I would never belong."

The city kids had a difficult time readjusting. One girl, Freda Miller, told to write home and say she had arrived safely, said: "I wrote, 'Dear Mrs Miller...' thinking that because I didn't live with her, she wasn't my mum any more." Some of the foster parents also had problems. One woman remembers a six year old girl from London arriving at her home: "Her first words were, 'Who's boss here Auntie?' and being a bit taken aback, I did not really know what to say so I said, 'I am the boss of the house and Uncle (my husband) is boss of the garden,' to which she replied, 'Well God and me are boss of the lot'."

Evacuation undoubtedly widened horizons ("Their house was full of books"; "I learned how to pluck geese"), though as one ex-evacuee pointed out, "We were not all raised on a diet of fish and chips eaten from newspaper, and many of us were quite familiar with the origins of milk."

Ben Wicks, an evacuee himself, believes that evacuation had a decided effect on attitudes to class. Encounters with new faces and places heightened an awareness of the class system, and a whole nation woke up to its injustices. This may have contributed to the resounding socialist victory in 1945.

The evacuees themselves had more immediate problems: some were bereaved; some had to get over being treated unkindly, even cruelly. Others, unable to cope with their "new" life back home, ran away and returned to their foster parents. Some stayed, but could not adjust: the pull of another family was a strong one. This vivid collection of memories recreates the whole traumatic story.

A 'Calavera' couple advertising a ball on the Day of the Dead, from 'J G Posada: Mexican popular prints' published by the Redstone Press, £10.95

The wonderful Mr Capote

CAPOTE: A BIOGRAPHY
Gerald Clarke
Hamish Hamilton £16.95

Sean French

From a journalistic point of view *In Cold Blood* looks distinctly dubious. Truman Capote deliberately presented the book like a novel, the first "non-fiction novel", he called it. He did not describe his working methods, nor did he identify his sources for particular items of information.

Many people found it inconceivable that this porcine social climber had done the legwork necessary to assemble such an account of life in a hick Kansas town. As a result, reporters were despatched to the scene of the crime to try and uncover all Capote's distortions and mistakes. The missions were all a failure—no errors of substance were ever found. Gerald Clarke quotes the *New Yorker* fact-checker, Sandy Campbell, as saying that he had worked with many *New Yorker* writers, such as A.J. Liebling, Richard Rovere and Lillian Ross, but that Truman was the most accurate. (In fact, Clarke reveals the shocking fact that Capote manufactured the book's closing scene.)

I'm sure that many people will read this book for its more squalid revelations. The progress of Capote's drinking and pill-popping is described in remorseless detail. There seems to be no close acquaintance who doesn't have a horror story about the night Truman did some terrible thing or other.

Clarke also gives a detailed rehearsal of Capote's fall from social grace. After the unparalleled success of *In Cold Blood*, Capote developed the quite unrealistic ambition to become the American Proust. Only fragments of *Answered Prayers* were ever written but the appearance in *Esquire* magazine of "La Cote Basque" was enough to cause his ejection from the high society that he valued so much. The story is little more than a compendium of upper class gossip and scandal with the most perfunctory fictional veneer—Clarke names names and shows just how perfunctory it was.

This chapter was recently reprinted in *Vanity Fair* and that's appropriate because it's a tale that has more to do with the world of gossip and publicity than of literature. Nor does it come as much of a surprise because it describes the Truman Capote we all know about.

I was far more struck by the extraordinary professionalism and dedication that Capote displayed at his best. When interviewing people, Capote would never use a tape-recorder or even a notebook. Researching *In Cold Blood*, he chatted to the Kansas folk with his old friend from the deep south, Harper Lee (author of the then shortly to be published *To Kill a Mockingbird*). When they returned to the hotel they would separate. As Clarke puts it: "Each wrote a separate version of the day's interviews; they then compared notes over drinks and dinner. 'Together,' declared Nelle [Harper Lee], 'we would get it right.' Their method was time-consuming but productive. When their combined memory failed, as it sometimes did, they went back and asked their questions in a slightly different way. On occasion they talked to the same person three times in one day." Capote first heard of the *In Cold Blood* killings in November 1959 and the book was published in January 1966.

Truman Capote has probably had a malign influence on journalism. When Capote developed the idea of using the techniques of fiction for his profile of Marlon Brando or his account of the *Porgy and Bess* tour of the Soviet Union, *The Muses are Heard*, he was making journalism more difficult not easier. *The Muses are Heard* was the work of his he most enjoyed writing but its 52,000 words took months of solid work to produce. In the hands of other journalists with short deadlines and indifferent editors, the technique became an excuse for shoddy research and inaccurate writing.

Apart from demonstrating his subject's professional integrity, Clarke's other main achievement is to show, despite everything, how loveable Capote was. It's easy to convey the awfulness of Capote but harder to explain why so many people liked having him around. Capote was a favoured guest of the New York jet set; but he achieved the same social cachet in Garden

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City, Kansas. After initial suspicions, these grim mid-westerners discovered that they liked having this bitchy, camp southerner to dinner. And the last letter written by the murderer Perry Smith before his execution was to Capote and Harper Lee: "I want you both to know that I have become very affectionate toward you."

Capote once had lunch with the Queen Mother. He was on his best behaviour for a bit but, in the words of one observer, by the time dessert arrived "all restraint was far away. T was yelping with laughter and gave a great whoop of joy when the summer pudding appeared." Later, when the Queen Mother had been led to her car, she leant out of the window to say "she thought Mr Capote quite wonderful, so intelligent, so wise, so funny."

Characteristically, this wasn't enough for Capote. When he told the story the tribute had come from the Queen herself.

Among the airheads

STORY OF MY LIFE
Jay McInerney
Bloomsbury £11.95

Harry Ritchie

You write a really neat novel in the second person about poor little rich kids who think coke is it. Overnight sensation, natch. You find you can't go to Nell's or the Tunnel without hassles from some asshole critic or gossip columnist. The glossies, chat shows, Hollywood, they're all, like, after you, calling you leader of the Brat Pack. Then, big surprise, your second novel is trashed. You bring out a third and the trend-spotters can't figure if you're yesterday's news or, hey, the voice of a generation.

The smart money must be on more than a few assessments of McInerney's latest chronicle of post-teen, drug-addled *Weltschmerz* continuing in this vein. Dismissive mimickry has been the inevitable response to his distinctive prose style, just as glib outrage and confusions of the author with his characters have been spurred by McInerney's own flash lifestyle. But now that with the too-aptly titled *Ransom* McInerney has paid the price of the hype for *Bright Lights, Big City*, he is owed calm appraisals rather than media raving or ranting.

In this third novel McInerney returns to WASP scenes of cloacal life with the story of the 20 year old Manhattanite, Alison Poole, a trainee actress, but one whose only lines come chopped up and on a mirror. Alison could easily have summarised the non-events of her fazing existence on a piece of paper the size of one of her credit cards—clubbing, bed-hopping, partying among the airheads, "falling in lust" with a bond-dealer, and nothing to show for it all but, as she puts it, "some kind of white stuff in every opening... brain in orbit nose in traction."

However, the energy of this book comes not from the tale—which develops and twists just enough to keep itself going—but the voice of the teller herself. And in creating Alison as his narrator, McInerney has taken an even greater gamble than he did in risking the "you" technique of *Bright Lights, Big City*.

Take, for example, the possible pitfalls of the tone, which McInerney does indeed successfully evade—Alison never comes across as the cute or peevish bimbo she could so easily have become, and her account is unerringly sharp and hard-edged. McInerney, like Eric Bogosian, Elmore Leonard and David Mamet, delivers a stunningly good American vernacular. From her first words ("I'm, like, I don't believe this shit") to her last, Alison is blessed with a laid-back, wisecracking streetspeak that is very funny, very moving and always irresistible: "Men. I've never met any. They're all boys... I've had a few dreams about making it with girls, but it's kind of like—sure, I'd love to visit Norway sometime."

The barrage of slick and cynical one-liners is vital in helping McInerney to overcome the fundamental risk he has taken by creating a female narrator, especially one who is sexually hyperactive, for, unless you subscribe to some view about the transcending, androgynous Muse, any such act of authorial drag has to be seen as terribly dodgy.

As far as I can tell, though, Alison is quite credible and quite unlike any product of crass masculinist fantasy. Indeed, what could have been an objectionable gimmick gives McInerney the opportunity to condemn quite a few of the pathetic, shallow facets of male heterosexuality. (In fact, a rather unconvincing aspect of Alison results from her creator's insider's knowledge—she is simply too astute about men.) The performance is cleverly conducted, certainly much better than might be expected. McInerney may not be the best young writer in America at the moment—my vote would go to Lorrie Moore—but he is definitely intriguing and effective, and he clearly deserves to survive the hype.

The case against God

A HISTORY OF ATHEISM IN BRITAIN: FROM HOBBES TO RUSSELL
David Berman
Croom Helm £30

Nicolas Walter

Atheism is a difficult subject to study. Sometimes it is used as a term of abuse; sometimes it is denied; almost always it is seen as something undesirable or abnormal; and hardly ever is it taken as a serious view of the world.

Of course it is still a minority view, because most people continue to believe in God—"or something very like him" (in Clough's neat phrase)—but the minority is large and growing, and includes many well-educated and well-behaved people. In this country today, for example, half the population never voluntarily attend any religious ceremony; half that number have no religious belief; and half *that* number actually call themselves atheists or agnostics (as many as Catholics, and far more than all the non-Christian religions put together).

So this study is welcome. David Berman, an American lecturer in philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin, has produced not a straight history of atheism in Britain from the mid-17th to the mid-20th century, as suggested by his title and subtitle, but a discursive account of various writings for and against atheism in this country during the first two centuries of that period, and especially of its emergence as an open view at the end of the 18th century.

Two aspects of this work are particularly valuable. The first is Berman's analysis of early attacks on atheism—which tended to be either unconsciously "repressive" or consciously "suppressive"—and of early expressions of unbelief—which tended to be "exoteric" defences of religion with "esoteric" implications of atheism. In those days atheists faced persecution, if not prosecution, so much of their activity was forced underground. The second is Berman's discovery of what seem to be the earliest examples of "avowed" as distinct from "covert" atheism in Britain—by obscure or anonymous writers as late as the 1780s and 1790s.

Berman examines the ambiguous writings of Hobbes and Hume and many less famous freethinkers; he emphasises the contributions of Shelley (perhaps a little too strongly) and of Richard Carlile (perhaps not strongly enough); and he then expounds the contributions of some of the Utilitarians (Grote, Bentham, Mill). He ends with a rather hasty summary of some later militants (Holyoake, Bradlaugh, Cohen) and academics (Moore, McTaggart, Russell), and a brief epilogue on the ethics of unbelief.

The book distils a great deal of hard reading and thinking into a clear and witty narrative, but it does have defects. The approach is resolutely academic, with little concession to those without considerable knowledge of the history of ideas. The reading of texts is very close, with little hint of wider contexts. The approach is very abstract, with no interest in social or political implications. The focus of attention is narrowly British, with little notice of the great French and German writers. The selection of writers is almost entirely confined to "professional" atheists, whether members of the freethought movement or of universities, with no time for lay or literary figures (thus the account of Shelley covers his prose but not his verse). There are a few minor points which seem questionable, above all the unargued assumption that "the high-water mark of British atheism" was reached 60 years ago. And the price is prohibitive.

But this is a worthwhile addition to the small library of recent books on unbelief, and should be read alongside Jim Herrick's popular survey, *Against the Faith*(1985) and George Smith's popular polemic, *Atheism: the case against God*(1979).

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Television

The real turn off

As the television companies launch their autumn schedules, Marta Wöhrle reports on competition to entice dwindling viewers

At a grim wake held last month for *Weekend World*, the London Weekend Television "flagship" current affairs show, a senior LWT programme executive remarked: "If you want programmes which are challenging, programmes which make you think, don't watch ITV. God help ITV."

While not everyone will mourn the passing of *Weekend World* which was transmitted for the last time in June, there are many in the television industry who agree with the LWT executive's indictment of ITV's programming policies. The launch of ITV's autumn schedules recently has done nothing to allay their fears.

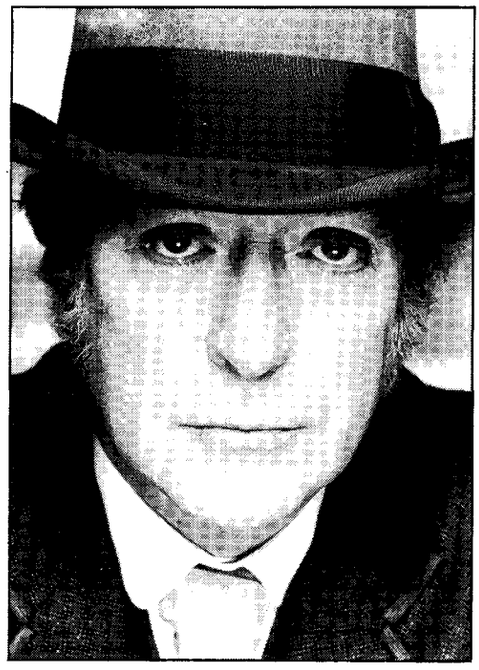
The bumper £100 million package of programmes for the autumn season is the latest attempt by the ITV network to avert what is increasingly being viewed as a crisis for independent television. Younger viewers are switching off ITV, audiences are being lost to the BBC and Channel 4 and advertisers are demanding action. In the meantime, ITV faces the new threat of competition from the satellite channels due to be launched next year.

The "make or break" schedule can only be described as drab. There is plenty of peak-time drama and entertainment, but ITV appears to have failed to find a solution to the problems of building audience loyalty. Over the past year, the BBC has been taking the lion's share of the audience and ITV seems unable to claw back. This latest schedule looks unlikely to redress the balance for it is weak on long-running series which are the building blocks of a strong schedule and the real vehicles for generating and keeping audiences.

Dominating our screens this autumn will be the glossy star-studded mini-series which have become the schedulers' substitutes for thoughtful and intelligent drama. Of the 19 new drama productions, 12 are one-offs or mini-series. ITV is hyping a cold war thriller, *Game, Set and Match* (an adaptation of Len Deighton's novel) and Michael Caine's first television series for 20 years, *Jack The Ripper*. The rest of the package relies on tried and tested formulas: *Rumpole Of The Bailey, Taggart, The Biederbecke Affair* and *The Return of Shelley*.

The real clues to ITV's strategy are to be found in what the network has left out. Where is innovation, experimentation and risk-taking? Certainly none of these ingredients is to be found in adaptations of cold war bestsellers. Cynical viewers may have stopped expecting programmes that challenge either in form or content. But what is equally worrying is that while ITV is failing to come up with anything new it is also desperately shedding the old: wrestling has been thrown out of the ring, *Crossroads* was pulled earlier this year. It can only be a matter of time before the last pint is pulled in the Rover's Return.

The reason for ITV's ruthless purge is that it has woken up to the fact that younger viewers—broadly, the under 35s—are not tuning in. In the last 10 years the number of viewers under 30 watching ITV has dropped by half. Today only working-class viewers over the age of 55 seem content with ITV's programmes. Advertisers have made themselves plain. They are not interested in the working-class backbone of ITV's audience, they want ITV to make the kinds of programmes that appeal to the young and affluent. They argue that while older viewers watch ITV's *Emmerdale Farm*, the young watch the BBC's *Film '88* and *MASH*. ITV's programme executives have responded by shedding the schedules of anything tarnished with working-class connotations and introducing to its autumn schedule a Yuppie sit-com, curiously, but perhaps aptly,



Can BBC's "EastEnders" (above left) fight off the threat from "Jack the Ripper" (above) or the yuppies of "Square Deal" (below)

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named *Square Deal*.

Working-class audiences in this increasingly divided nation are concentrated in the north and the affluent audiences, coveted by advertisers, are in the south. Without stopping to question whether "public service" broadcasters should ignore those in the north, those on low incomes and the old, ITV is doing its best to meet the advertisers' demands. It is also noteworthy that the two London-based stations, Thames and LWT, make 43 per cent of the programmes on the network.

Questions that ITV executives should be asking themselves—such as how can public service broadcasting be reconciled with growing commercial pressures and how they can strive towards more innovative programmes—are being ignored. The creative energies of these people are being channelled into badly co-ordinated and, so far, unsuccessful attempts to get more viewers and second guess the strategies of the new satellite channels. ITV's solution to its crisis has been to submerge itself in bureaucracy. It has established numerous committees with over 60 programming executives who meet endlessly to tussle over funding and scheduling.

The BBC meanwhile launched a rather more modest schedule for autumn on BBC1. With £62 million BBC1 has come up with 400 new hours of programming and 15 new comedy and variety shows. No crisis of cultural identity for the BBC—it has put together a reasonably balanced package that rests on a notion of public service broadcasting that although hardly very radical is at least more consistent.

The BBC, however, is caught up in the compulsion to compete. To everyone's surprise it has demonstrated that it is rather good at it. But the BBC is not above dirty tricks and manipulation of the schedule. Its success in the ratings war is almost entirely bolstered by the stripping of the Australian soap *Neighbours* twice a day five days a week and *EastEnders* with its Sunday omnibus.

The result of these scheduling tactics has been to distort the picture of what viewers really want to watch. With *Neighbours* dominating the ratings it is impossible to tell whether the rare examples of diversity and innovation are popular. Last winter, for example, the Top 10s revealed that only 61 transmissions secured an audience of 15 million or more and 25 of these were of *Coronation Street*.

However, no matter how the broadcasters use soaps and "stripping" (running a programme at the same time everyday) to bolster the Top 10s, there is a worrying trend which none of them appears able to stop: overall audiences are in decline. Compare audiences in 1985 with the first six months of this year: *Coronation Street* averaged 18.3 million compared to 15.9 million this year; *Dallas* 14.1 million in 1985 and down to 9.4 million; *Family Fortunes* down from 13.5 million to 9 million.

The term "popular" programming increasingly seems to be a misnomer. Viewers are registering their *real* preferences with the off button.

Magazines

Rural retreats

Julian Petley on pastoral escapism in the current crop of country living titles

In his famous hymn to Englishness, *On England*, Stanley Baldwin wrote that "to me England is the country, and the country is England". Since Baldwin's time the ever-present streak of ruralism seems to have increasingly gripped English consciousness with all the force of a mania—witness the Laura Ashley phenomenon or the extraordinary success of *The Country Diary Of An Edwardian Lady*, whose title as Robert Hewison observes in *The Heritage Industry*, "manages to roll all the pastoralism, snobbery and retromania of nostalgia into one". Appropriately, the letters column of the *Guardian* recently became preoccupied with debate about *The Archers*, nicely illustrating David White's remark that "there is some corner in the English mind that is forever Ambridge".

This obsession with the rural is most evident in magazine publishing. At one time there was *Country Life* and the *Field*, and that was about it. Now we have the *Country Times, Country Homes and Interiors, Country Living* and an absolute plethora of specialist magazines devoted to walking, gardening, riding and, of course, hunting, shooting and fishing. Even magazines devoted to individual counties, or to the country as a whole, turn out to have an overwhelmingly rural slant. Certainly anyone unfamiliar with the British Isles could be forgiven for imagining them, on the basis of these magazines, as overwhelmingly agrarian in character. Indeed, a recent advertisement for the quarterly the *Countryman* (one of the old school of rural magazines) speaks of "the richness of places and people, customs and crafts, waysides and wildlife which compose the rural patchwork of Britain", amply testifying to the ubiquitous, and seemingly desperate, denial of the overriding fact that the vast bulk of the population lives and works in cities, towns and suburbs.

The vision of England presented by the quarterly *This England* is almost exclusively pastoral. The summer issue contains features on the flowers of Flora Thompson, "English Village Characters: Three Guardians of Nature", England's country churches, "Village Vignettes", "From an English Country Garden", and so on. The mood of unrelieved nostalgia, almost pathetic in its intensity, carries over into non-rural items such as "Faggies: a Box of Boyhood Treasures" (about cigarette cards, before you get the wrong idea!) and "Music Hall Monologues and Comic Songs", and is accompanied by a strong streak of militarism (articles on the "soldier poets", the King's Own Regiment and the Victoria Cross), royalism (a feature on the Queen Mother, and an editorial devoted to her) and a truly glutinous, marrow-withering strand of sentimental religiosity expressed in various hymns, poems and a feature on John Oxenham "the hymnwriter who foxed Fleet Street". Inevitably, sentiments abound such as "Privileged? Yes, but isn't everybody who has had the good fortune to be born in England?" and "muggers, rapists and mindless hooligans were not the scourge of society that they are today". A look at the voluminous letters section is also revealing; hardly surprisingly, the bulk come from the south but many of the rest are written by expatriates. As Patrick Wright has noted in *On Living in an Old Country*, it is as if: "The purest Britons are those who simply couldn't stand the decline any longer . . . Only from outside can one be the truly loyal custodian of a nation which has declined to the point where it exists only in memory and distant imagination."

Like the National Socialist's veneration of the peasantry, T S Eliot's admiration of *Action Française* and the beliefs which caused Henry Williamson to be locked up during the last war, *This England* reminds us all too clearly of the reactionary articulations of which the pastoral myth is capable. A different version of the myth, however, can be glimpsed in *Country Living, Country Homes and Interiors*, and the latter's rival *Traditional Homes* (which, significantly, is mainly about *rural* homes). These are clearly aimed at ex-townies, or would-be ex-townies eager to cash in their over-priced London properties and snap up a rural bargain. Thus, the September issue of *Country Homes and Interiors* carries in its regular Property Portfolio slot a feature on East Anglia, now a much sought after rural retreat, while August's *Country Living* tells us "Yes, You *Can* Find a House For Under £50,000". (If you're a farm labourer, however, you won't actually be able to *buy* it).

But, of course, these magazines aren't aimed at people who work on the land, only those who own it. *Country Living*'s idea of country living is nicely summed up by the run-in to its "Under Summer Skies" feature which invites us to "spend long sunny days beachcombing or plant spotting on cliff walks, picnicking or sitting in a shady garden sewing; embroider an exquisite damask tablecloth to last for generations; make our traditional country smock or a simple linen dress, and share our celebration of summer". *Country Homes and Interiors* even manages to find "rural" aspects of London to celebrate in its Capital Country column—dining *al fresco*, London's squares, Hampstead Heath and so on. In the September issue we are introduced to Tory MP for Chelmsford Simon Burns and his wife Emma who "have transformed their town house into an elegant country cottage".

However, in terms of politics, *Country Homes and Interiors* seems to have a markedly SDP/SLD-ish flavour: August's issue carried a long interview with Rosie Barnes and September's a feature entitled "At Home With Paddy Ashdown". It is these articles which perhaps provide the clue to the deeper meaning of the relentless flow of images of lovingly detailed interiors which make up the bulk of these magazines, for they are perfect expressions of that intensification of private space which Roy Strong has identified as the "new Biedermeier", referring to the current re-enactment of that process which took place in the 19th-century Austro-Hungarian Empire when "the *ancien régime* was reinstated and the liberal middle classes, denied power, turned in on themselves and created a style of living whose basis was the cultivation of domestic virtues in the form

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of all aspects of family life, the home and the garden". In other words, if you're a disappointed supporter of the SDP, the SLD or even (dare one say it?) of the Labour Party, it's not simply a question of "going to work in the garden" like Voltaire's *Candide*, but also of "redecorating the cottage" as well.

As usual, the letters columns provide a fascinating insight into the needs which these magazines are designed to fulfil. The August issue of *Country Living* is particularly revealing in this respect. Under the giveaway heading "Pure Escapism" we find the sad story of a lady in Reading who had a brick thrown through her bedroom window in the night. Having passed a sleepless night she went to W H Smith and bought a copy of the May issue of *Country Living*, which featured a picture of a bluebell wood on the cover. She continues, "The picture took me right into the wood and I was surrounded by bluebells; I could smell their delicate scent and that of the trees. I bought the magazine and, back home, slowly went through it page by page. It was so beautiful that it took away the tension and strain. I cut out the bluebell picture and the New Forest spread and had them framed to hang on my walls and so bring the countryside right into my home. Thank you for reminding me that we still live in a beautiful world." Nothing could illustrate more poignantly the roots of the appeal of rural mythology and its predominantly escapist, compensatory function.

A further letter, with the revealing title "Paradise Revisited", tells the story of an 87-year-old lady who returned to the cottage where she was evacuated during the last war and found it little changed. "When our countryside is changing so fast," the owners of the cottage write, "it is heart-warming to hear that our little corner hasn't altered very much in nearly 50 years . . . Our visitor's friends had warned her against a 'trip down memory lane' since it was bound to have changed. She was delighted to find it so little altered." Again, this straightforward, unaffected letter speaks volumes about the nature of the rural myth in contemporary Britain. In visiting rural Britain, either literally or through the pages of country magazines, we are increasingly persuaded that we are actually visiting "the past" itself. The time machine has finally arrived.

Country Life, the *Country Times* and the *Field* present a different picture again to the dubious mawkish sentimentalism of *This England* and the New Biedermeier of *Country Living* et al. Of course, the basically conservative orientation of rural mythology isn't hard to spot here either—for example in the editorial of the *Field*'s special anniversary issue, which asserts that although many changes have taken place since the publication of the first issue in 1853 there are also "deeper realities that have not changed—national characteristics like fidelity to country in all senses, beliefs in and regard for the standards of our ancestors, whether materially or in principle . . . We shall not abandon those expressions of British character to which the nation patently wishes to stay true. We stand for the good life in all its wholesome aspects. We leave the transient follies of the day to others."

On the other hand there is a good deal of emphasis in these three magazines on hunting, shooting and fishing (which might well offend the

Paul Batterman

sensibilities of the readers of the others) and, in the *Field* at least, on the mechanics of farming itself (which they might find simply irrelevant and uninteresting). The August issue of the *Field* carried a long special section entitled "Land Under Threat: Do Politicians Really Care?". which consisted of detailed articles on rural housing, forestry, green politics and farming policy in general. These represent by far the most critical, least mythologised pieces in any of the magazines discussed so far. The article on rural housing complemented another in the magazine entitled "Now For the Price Fall", which warned the would-be rural "arrivistes" of an imminent fall in London property prices. It contrasts interestingly with *Country Living* et al, criticising the very processes which they so enthusiastically celebrate and bemoaning the fact that people can now neither rent nor buy houses in the villages in which they grew up. Even more interesting is the article by Jonathan Porritt (carefully introduced as "far from an extremist") which fiercely criticises the Tories for their lack of a "green" consciousness.

Meanwhile, on the letters page, we find the astonishing admission that, "I regard the activities of the League Against Cruel Sports to be far less worrying than this government's attitude to the countryside. Presently obsessed with development and expansion, with, it appears, little or no regard of the consequences, the countryside is threatened in a way unimaginable to previous Conservative supporters."

No one, I think, would pretend that the *Field* is anything other than a conservative magazine. However, it very much represents the traditional, land-owning, one-nation Tory Party of the shires which is not altogether happy at the way in which the Thatcherite faction has hijacked the show and is frankly dismayed at the way in which it has slashed rural services and now seems determined to sanction the destruction of the Green Belt (as long as it's not in the vicinity of *Maison* Ridley). Furthermore, its less sentimental, less mythologised view of the countryside is perhaps not unconnected with the fact that some of its readers may actually *work* in it, or at least make a living out of it, as opposed to using it as a rural dormitory or a storehouse of pretty-pretty pastoral imagery that bears little relation to the rural reality of Britain in this or any other century.

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Molly Roth has a meal with friends in 'A World Apart'

Cinema

Politics of choice

Suzanne Moore on a powerful weepie

Film critics don't cry. I mean can you imagine Barry Norman or Alexander Walker fumbling for a Kleenex during a preview? No, instead they say they find a film "moving", "powerful" or "penetrating" to show that their reaction is based on considered judgment rather than dubious emotion. It is as though emotional involvement is thought somehow to preclude, or be divorced from, critical assessment. Yet for many film-goers, being reduced to tears is the mark of a great movie—though I'm not sure how many men would admit to having a bit of a sniffle.

Weepies are usually associated with silly and sentimental films and yet the least sentimental film I've seen in a long while certainly made me cry. Chris Menges' directorial debut **A World Apart** is set in the South Africa of the early sixties. Like *Cry Freedom* it explores apartheid through the angst of a white family but, unlike *Cry Freedom*, its unblinking stare catches the contradictions as well as the heroism of its characters. This is largely because the story is told through the eyes of 13-year-old Molly Roth. Jodhi May gives an extraordinary performance as a girl trying to come terms with her parents' political activism and its very real effects on her life.

Written by Shawn Slovo, daughter of Ruth First and Joe Slovo—the exiled ANC leader—*A World Apart* is a true story based on her childhood. As Molly Roth's middle-class parents become more involved in the struggle against apartheid, her father is forced into exile and the personal costs of their politics are borne by the whole family. Molly is taunted at school about her "traitor" father and also experiences a lesser but equally painful form of exile—her friends are not allowed to see her anymore.

When her mother is taken into detention, her family seems to be breaking apart and Molly runs after the car crying, "don't go Mummy, don't go", as if her mother were choosing to leave her. In a sense, through her activism, her mother is choosing a certain path that leaves her daughter with no choice whatsoever.

This exclusion from the world of politics, of struggle, of secretive goings-on and from her mother's decisions leave Molly confused and isolated. Barbara Hershey plays her mother, Diana Roth, and appears unusually hard and defiant not only with the authorities but with her own children. Like so many "radicals" she unreasonably expects everyone to share her total commitment and she is willing to sacrifice not only herself but those close to her for the greater good.

When Molly complains that she never sees her mother, Diana asks her instead to consider the plight of Elsie, their black housekeeper, who is also separated from her family. But this idea of thinking of others worse off than yourself is as good as useless to a child demanding love and attention. Molly is resentfully and rightfully angry and issues that most contradictory of demands, "don't treat me like a child!"—for what she needs most of all *is* to be treated like a child.

It is the impossibility of reconciling motherhood with political activity that tears apart not only her family but Diana Roth herself. Though she is incredibly brave, the film itself is brave in its portrayal of her, showing her as an admirable, but not necessarily likeable, heroine. The chinks in her emotional armour are filled with defiance and lipstick even in her prison cell. But however much she suffers or is mistreated, the most tortuous question that her interrogators ask her is also the most ordinary: "What kind of a mother are you?"

In less dramatic ways this is the question that prevents so many women becoming involved in politics. How can you leave your children for hours, days, weeks to go to meetings, demonstrations, conferences? Political activism, while appearing totally selfless, often seems to require a peculiar kind of selfishness.

Yet the film makes clear that for the black people of the townships these questions are still a luxury. There is no choice between the "personal and the political". Like Molly, who as a child is disenfranchised politically, who has no say over her own life, and who feels totally powerless, the situation under apartheid breeds desperation.

The strength of *A World Apart* is its relentlessness. One longs for a break, for a lighter scene, for things to be alright just for a little while, not to be reminded continually of just how bad things are. But the regime that created apartheid will smash up a child's birthday party as easily as it will smash a skull. This film bears witness to this unremitting violence and to those who fight against it. See it and weep.

Comedy

Nothing like a woman

Richard Dyer on the malice of Dame Edna Everage

Great humour is seldom very nice. I watched Edna Everage with some predictably baffled American friends recently. At first I thought they just didn't get the joke due to unfamiliarity, then that it must reveal the narrowness of British humour; but seeing the re-runs of the **Dame Edna Everage Experience** (LWT, Sundays at 9.15pm) at the same time as a new series of *The Golden Girls* suggests another possibility. Blanche and co are undoubtably the best contemporary American television comedy on British screens, and it's a show that does risk being funny about ageing, death and lust, but at its heart it wants you to be sure it's still got heart—you know it'll round off nicely with the girls at one, comfy together in their mail order home. It lacks malice. One could not accuse Dame Edna of that.

You may love Dame Edna but she does not set out to be loveable. Or rather, Barry Humphries does not set out to make her loveable, though one of the most dreadful things about her is her insistence that she is loved and her manipulation of

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the vocabulary of adoration and friendship celebrities milk so nauseatingly to display their worthiness to be loved. Equally easy on her ironic lips is the language of humanistic psycho-babble—"I mean that in a very caring way", "My guests and I relate to each other on this show". Even on *Desert Island Discs*, a programme entirely founded on the myth of English niceness, Dame Edna put the knife in, saying to Sue Lawley that, yes, she knew that she was born with a great gift, "rather like you, Sue, in a small way."

There's no doubt that one's delight comes from the lightning surprise of such remarks, the full viciousness of which hits us before it hits their victims. By the time the conventions of niceness and friendliness have been put back in place, it is too late for the victims to get their own back. Then again, those for whom Dame Edna's barbs seem sharpest are also those one so longs to see deflated. She doesn't go for the obvious targets. Stand-bys of the liberal hate list like Mary Whitehouse get really quite an easy ride, as do those, like Demis Roussos, so predictably sneered at by a certain kind of educated opinion.

It is the bland and serious, those media figures who so like to come on as if they speak for us all, that Dame Edna is so good at getting at. Who cannot have thrilled to her treatment of Jeffrey Archer. How brilliantly Dame Edna caught him out peddling himself as a nice chap, getting him to tell jokes against himself (aren't I a sport?) and turning them against him—in one he puts on an accent and she cried, "what a funny little working-class person that was!"; after another, some rigmarole,

designed to display his own modesty, about seating arrangements in a swanky Hollywood restaurant, Dame Edna said, sweetly of course: "You could work that up into quite a nice little anecdote".

In the bland world of television, the Dame is a great tonic. Still, that's all very well, but isn't it really pretty reactionary all the same? Racist and homophobic remarks might be meant to be a joke against people, who say such things, but don't they give such remarks free passage? Then again, she is not a she—isn't she, like drag so often is, a projection of male fantasies about women, supposed female qualities exaggerated all the better to mock them? Isn't there something a little too disturbingly convincing about the terminal depression of her much exploited side-kick Madge? And doesn't Dame Edna's Australian-ness feed the worst kind of British snobbery, her bad taste and intellectual pretensions flattering a nation that in fact has few peers for philistinism and wilful ignorance?

Edna Everage is a grotesque, an exuberantly exaggerated and distorted bevy of reversals—a man who is a woman, a housewife who is a superstar, a drag queen who looks nothing like any woman (unlike Danny La Rue) and yet is treated by such certifiable straights as Sean Connery or Charlton Heston as if he really is one (I bet they wouldn't kiss Danny so cheerfully). As with all grotesques, she, and Sir Les Patterson, do this through visions of the human body not quite under control or neatly in place. Her glistening, endlessly distorted mouth (stuffed with chocolates filled with Nivea in an unforgettable *Arena* programme); prurient talk of bodily juices and operations and high-stepping, knees-bent, legs-apart dancing; him dribbling visibly from every frontal orifice, stomach about to burst through his shirt and teeth to come flying from his mouth. Grotesquerie, from Rabelais to John Waters, is neither very nice, nor unerringly right-on, but in the face of the buttoned-up, well-ironed, deodorised authoritarian complacency of Lawley, Bough, Rantzen, *News at Ten* and *Tomorrow's World*, I can't help being grateful for la Edna.

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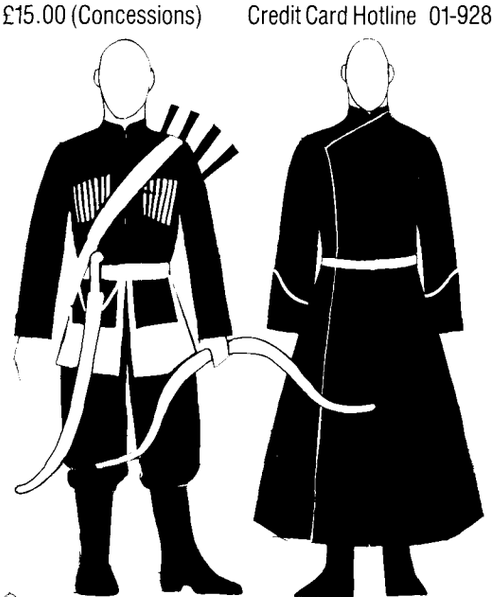

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Music

Forbidden Fruits

Stuart Cosgrove on the return of the hallucinogens

In 1974, on the dancefloor of the now derelict Wigan Casino Soul Club, a democratic show-of-hands voted against the BBC. Dancers from the club's northern soul scene responded to the wishes of the club's resident DJ and refused to allow a *Nationwide* camera crew to film inside the club. Disgruntled with seeing their club represented as a haven for amphetamine abuse, the intensely loyal comrades of northern soul pre-empted Nancy Reagan and just said "no".

Last week, history repeated itself. The BBC's news department, responding to an erroneous article in a recent issue of the *Observer*, began to investigate the upsurge of drug abuse on the London based "acid-house" scene, the hardcore club underground which is currently dominating the development of new music in both Britain and the USA. The clubs immediately closed ranks, refused to grant interviews, denied the cameras free access and successfully gave the BBC the bum's rush.

So why has the publicity-hungry dance scene suddenly resorted to the sound of silence? The answer is *ecstasy*, a synthetically compounded drug known in medical circles by the cumbersome name of methylene-dioxymthamphetamine which has become the most controversial stimulant to attach itself to music since the hallucinogenic days of the late sixties.

Although ecstasy has been available in Britain for several years, initially as an expensive and decidedly upmarket "designer" drug, it is over the last six months that it has found its true vocation—London clubs like Spectrum, Shoom, Love and The Trip, where "acid-house" music is the dominant beat, and ecstasy is the forbidden fruit.

"Acid house" is a dislocating dance sound that emerged out of the Chicago club scene in 1987, when a local Illinois producer, known simply as Pierre, recorded an estranged futuristic disco record called *Acid-Trax*. Credited to a fictitious dance group called Phuture and released on Chicago's leading independent label Trax, *Acid-Trax* was one of those accidental hits which came from the heart of the underground to reshape the style of new music.

The acid sound is essentially a technical mistake—a distorted noise made by a hi-tech synthesiser known as a Roland TR303—but the title "acid" has a magnetic attractiveness which in the minds of the faddishly creative denizens of the London club became the clarion call of a new youth crusade. Within a year of Phuture's *Acid Trax* reaching British import shops, a new subculture—possibly the most influential since punk—had sprung up in Britain's major cities and the recording industry geared itself up for a profitable phuture.

Over the last month, "acid-house" records have been bombarding the record shops. The most controversial has been a series of hurriedly released compilation albums which have laboured the relationship between "acid-house" and drug abuse. *House Hallucinates Vol 1* (A+M), *Jack The Tab* (Castalia) and *Acid Trax Vol 2* (Serious Drug) are probably the worst offenders, each of them using barely coded references to ecstasy as a way of adding excitement to what, in some cases, are routine and uninventive attempts to capture the awesome relentlessness of the best house sounds.

The "acid-house" explosion is a typically British response to new music. Only Britain, home of every restless sub-culture from mod to goth, could have ritualised music with such fierce devotion. As Brighton prepares for its first "acid-house" all-day party this weekend, the seaside town that helped mythologise the rise of mods and rockers will play host to the archetypal acid-heads, teenagers in billowing tee-shirts, self-mocking paisley patterned headbands and yellow smiley badges.

The news media's recent interest in "acid-house" revolves around another infamously British institution: the moral panic. It seems almost neolithic to resort to the early seventies for the definitive perspective on "acid-house", but Stanley Cohen's authoritative study of British youth deviance, *Folk Devils And Moral Panic* remains the best source. "In the case of drug-taking," he argues, "the media play on the normative concerns of the public and, by thrusting certain moral directives into the universe of discourse, can create social problems suddenly and dramatically".

If Cohen's bible of deviancy throws light on the media's response to "acid-house" the social theories his book spawned are more likely to lead us up one of sociology's most intriguing blind-alleys. Typical "acid" records like Debris King's *House Control* challenge the whole notion that there is resistance in the rituals of Britain's new club underground.

The clothes and drug indulgences may periodically hark back to psychedelia and the libertarian era of 1988, but "acid-house" is dominated by an authoritarian language of hedonism, hysteria, subservience and control. The pleasure comes not from resistance but from total surrender.

The ecstasy drug and its inevitable soundtrack "acid-house" have become social problems in the most sudden and dramatic ways: trapped on the one hand between unscrupulous record companies which are marketing the music in the most sickeningly opportunist ways, and, on the other hand, by moral entrepreneurs in the media and in some of the country's most respected drug agencies, who have seized on the completely bogus claims that ecstasy causes Parkinson's disease.

To expect the pop music industry to be less opportunistic is like asking George Bush to tap dance. But expecting our national news media to refrain from spreading drug disinformation is surely a reasonable request? Be reasonable—demand the impossible. Dance, George, George, dance!

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ACTION SPACE London Events requires volunteers to help set up and run leisure activities for people with severe learning difficulties. Lively, colourful & fun sessions enjoyable by all. Saturday 10am until 1pm fortnightly. Stockwell area. Travel expenses paid. Telephone Jonathon 01-444 4614.

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SAFE & CONSIDERATE Drivers are urgently needed by Age Concern St. Helens, to drive a 12 seater minibus with a tail lift. Can you spare one day a week to drive frail elderly people from their homes to our neighbourhood day centres? Expenses will be reimbursed. Contact Lorraine on St. Helens 52644 for details.

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HELP!

The HELP programme is a 5 minute local programme appearing at 6.25 on Thames TV, three times a week. Here is a summary of next week's programmes.

MONDAY 6 SEPTEMBER – BCODP

Why did 3000 disabled people, a 1000 of them wheelchair users, march on the DSS? We look at their campaign to highlight poverty among disabled people, and to encourage people to apply for the Independent Living Fund, newly set up to help severely disabled people with the costs of personal care and domestic assistance. For details ring on the night 01-388-2388.

The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People, St Mary Church, Greenlaw Street, London, SE18 5AR. Tel: 01-854-7298

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER – FUND RAISING

Many charities and voluntary groups are currently facing a cash crisis as local authorities cut and cut again. Raising funds is a time consuming process and with the help of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations we have prepared an information pack containing details of different sources of money, publication lists on fund raising and how to go about it.

Write to: HELP! (Funding), PO Box 11, London, NW1 3HZ.

THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER – ORAL HISTORY

7000 men and women from Britain's Caribbean colonies died in active service for the Allies in World War II. All of them were volunteers. Next year, in time for the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the War, the West Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association hopes to launch a permanent exhibition so that their stories are not lost. If you are a West Indian Ex-Serviceman who served in the Second World War and have stories and memorabilia to contribute to the exhibition then write to:

West Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association, 165 Clapham Manor Street, London, SW4 6DB Tel: 01-627-0702.

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YOUNG ADULTS CENTRE in Dagenham, Essex, needs volunteers to help with evening sessions 3 times a week. We need people who can offer - regular commitment and a supportive, and understanding approach to young people. Please telephone Ann or Charlotte on 01-580 4827 for more information (office hours).

ACTION/RESEARCH needs volunteers during the day to help carry out research into unemployment etc on White City Estate. You will be involved in carrying out a survey of two blocks of flats. This would be good exprience for students who are learning about research or unemployed people interested in community development. Training will be provided and reasonable expenses paid. Please contact Keith Bird on 740 0477 or visit the Fatima Community Centre, Commonwealth Ave, White City Estate, W12.

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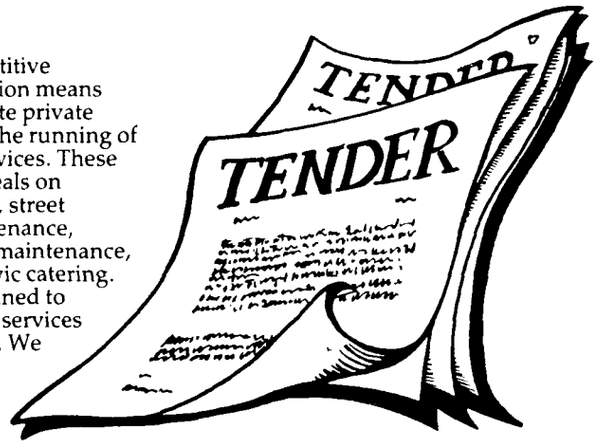

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GROWING TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

To address increasing community needs and improve the quality of service to the local community, Newham Social Services Department has just created a number of new posts. This means we are currently seeking to appoint:

5 AREA-BASED TEAM LEADERS

Salary: £14715 - £15747 p.a. inclusive

Three of these posts will provide the unique opportunity to build a new social services team.

We are currently in the final stages of integrating our patch-based, locally organised home care scheme into area teams. Additional under fives posts have also been created and it is anticipated that these workers will also become part of your team.

This increase in service provision should result in better support and supervision for all staff. The two existing locally based vacancies will also provide opportunities for innovative and developmental work, as we are currently reviewing local boundaries.

We are looking for mature, flexible social workers with at least three years post-qualifying experience and a real interest in local social service provision.

You should be able to demonstrate a proven record of good practice, knowledge of relevant legislation and an understanding of the issues involved in community social work.

If you are able to motivate others, are sensitive to the needs of consumers and colleagues and would enjoy working co-operatively as a member of an Area management team, we would welcome your application.

There is a team leaders support group and a further training package for team leaders is being developed. The Council has maintained its commitment to staff development and training and we can offer you:

- Regular supervision
- Excellent training opportunities
- Varied work experience
- The opportunity to contribute to the development of new service initiatives

Newham is an inner urban area with a high birth-rate and an increasing population of frail elderly people. Planned and new developments in the Docklands and Lea Valley areas are bringing great change to the community.

We have one of the most varied multi-racial populations in the country. Nearly 27% of heads of households were born outside Britain: 16% are Asian, speaking a number of languages including Hindi, Gujerati, Punjabi and Tamil.

We are positively committed to developing an equal opportunities approach in all our work and successful candidates will have given real thought to the implications this has for service delivery in busy Area teams.

Job share is available. Relocation expenses may be considered.

Because of the multi-cultural nature of the community, we would particularly welcome applications from Asian and African-Caribbean people.

Closing date: 9th September 1988.

Contact: Director of Social Services, 99 The Grove, Stratford E15 or telephone: 01 519 2095 (24 hours).

Newham Council is committed to an equal opportunities policy. This means that the Council is committed to ensuring that no job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or is disadvantaged by condition of requirements which cannot be seen to be justifiable.
All jobs are open for job sharers, unless otherwise stated.

Newham
An Equal Opportunity Authority

Are you a qualified Social Worker, Nurse, Teacher or similar?

with 5 years plus experience & driving licence. Phone for detailed booklet and full particulars of interesting, unusual & responsible post in

fully residential CHILD CARE

Comfortable totally uninstitutional alternative to fostering for children in long-stay care.

Initially £12,000 – £13,000
(+ free board & lodging, 6 weeks holiday)

substantially more available for someone willing & able to carry additional responsibility.

Phone WARRAX, STANSTEAD ABBOTTS, HERTS, on Ware (0920) 870058

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

Applications are invited for the following posts working on a study funded by the Medical Research Council to evaluate screening of osteoporotic hip fracture.

Research Associate ● Applicants should have post graduate experience in the field of epidemiological/social research, preferably in the areas of nutrition, mobility and the elderly.

The post will be for three years starting 1st November 1988 and the salary will be in the range of £9,865-£15,720.

Research Assistant ● Applicants should be graduates with experience in physical measurement and interview techniques.

The post will be for 1 year starting 1st November 1988 and the salary will be in the range of £8,675-£11,680.

Application forms and further details can be obtained from:

Dr C. W. McGrother, Department of Community Health, Clinical Sciences Building, Leicester Royal Infirmary, Leicester, LE2 7LX. Tel: 0533 523197.

Closing date for applications: 19 September 1988.

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University of Sheffield

SECOND UNIVERSITY COUNSELLOR

Applications are invited from men and women graduates with a recognised qualification in personal counselling for the above post tenable from a date as soon as possible. Candidates should preferably have experience of counselling in a higher education setting.

Initial salary on the Administrative staff scales, Grades 1 or 2 (£8,675–£15,720 per year), according to age, qualifications and experience.

Further particulars are available from the Personnel Department (Academic Staffing), The University, Sheffield S10 2TN to which applications (6 copies) including a curriculum vitae and the names and addresses of three referees, should be sent by **30 September 1988.** Please quote reference **R.853/X.**

An Equal Opportunity Employer.

at the leading edge

London Borough of Camden

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Intermediate Treatment Officers (2)

Juvenile Resource Team

£11,691 - £13,575 pa inc.

To work as part of a team, providing suitable programmes for young offenders and young people at risk, in the overall management co-ordination and development of Intermediate Treatment in the borough and promote good practice within the Juvenile Justice System.

1). TEMPORARY (Maternity Leave cover until 24th April, 1989). Will be based in the field at Northern Camden.
Ref: 10/143/NS

2). PERMANENT - based in the field at Southern Camden. This is a new section which has amalgamated with the Court Section to form the Juvenile Resource Team.
Detached/Community work experience important, as is some Court experience.
Ref: 10/145/NS

Closing date: 19th September, 1988.
Application form from and to be returned to: Social Services Departmental Personnel Unit, Willing House, 356/364 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8BH. Tel: 837 5621 (ansafone). Please quote appropriate reference.

Camden Services

equal opportunity employer

Applicants are considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, with equal opportunities for women, black/ethnic minorities, lesbians and gay men and people with disabilities, and regardless of marital status, age, creed/ religion and unrelated criminal conviction. All posts are open for job-sharing.

Probation Officer • Swaziland

Probation Officer - Swaziland Association for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of Offenders

To be involved in the setting up and implementaion of a programme similar to the U.K. Community Service Order.

Applicants should have CQSW and at least 5 years' experience of probation work, 2 years' of which involved in Community Service Orders, preferably at policy and planning level.

IVS Overseas provides a 2 year contract, salary based on local rates, flights, accommodation, NI contributions, medical cover and language training where necessary.

Applicants must have the right of permanent residence in U.K. or Ireland. Regret no funding for dependents.

IVS

Application form from:
Recruitment Selection
IVS Overseas
3 Belvoir St.
LEICESTER LE1 6SL
Closing date for applications: 30 Sept
Please quote ref: NSS/PO/S/09/88

NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY ACTION

NICVA

The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action is a major charity and development agency committed to social change by tackling disadvantage through community development work with voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (INFORMATION)

£10,434 - £13,458

The Assistant Director will be head of the Information Unit (4.5 staff) responsible for:

* NICVA's information and advice work geared to the promotion of community development strategies
* development and maintenance of issue-based press publicity
* implementation of the publications plan, including editing 'Scope', NICVA's monthly magazine

The Assistant Director will be a member of NICVA's management team and contribute to corporate planning and decision-making.

Application form and job description from:
Margaret Thompson, NICVA, 127 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 1SH
Telephone: (0232) 321224

CLOSING DATE: Friday 23 September 1988.

Previous applicants will be reconsidered.

NICVA is an equal opportunity employer

FEA FAIR EMPLOYER

The London Dial-a-Ride Users Association

DIRECTOR

(previous applicants for 'Coordinator' post need not reapply)

To be responsible for all aspects of the Associations's work in campaigning for an expanded and improved provision of public transport for people with disabilities.

Salary £13,932 p.a., 25 days holiday, non-contributory pension.

Further details and application form from:

London Dial-a-Ride Users Association
St Margarets, 25 Leighton Road, London, NW5 2QD
Telephone: 01-482 2325

Closing date: 23rd September 1988.

We are an Equal Opportunities Employer, and particularly welcome applications from people with disabilities. Premises accessible, taped applications accepted.

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Metropolitan Borough of
CALDERDALE

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

"A major development in Mental Health Services"

We have established a new residential home to assist in the rehabilitation of adults recovering from mental ill health.

It is deliberately not purpose built, but is a comfortable, tastefully decorated period property, set in extensive grounds at Elland. The main house will accommodate 12 people and a satelite house, in the local neighbourhood will provide places for 4 more independent residents. Staff will be available 24 hours a day, to include working night staff to provide a responsive and appropriate support for people.

To consolidate this new service we wish to appoint

Part-time Residential Social Workers (3 posts)

1) 19½ Hours — Post Number SLY010

2) 2 Posts — Nights 20 or 30 Hours — Post Number SLY011 and SLY012

RASC 1/2 — £5,802-£7,674 pa (unqualified)
£6,396 -£8,133 pa (qualified)

(Enhanced rates will be paid for hours worked at night)

Are you a mature and sensitive person who has had experience of working with people who suffer from mental ill health? A relevant professional qualification is desirable.

Can you work with residents in helping them to re-establish self confidence, self worth and the practical skills in living a more independent life?

Can you work imaginatively, flexibly and patiently as part of the small staff team, launching this new service?

Sleeping-in duties are required for post number SLY010 for which a payment of £12.06 per night will be made.

For further information please contact Jim Campbell, Officer in Charge on Halifax 72808 or Mike Matthews, Residential and Day Care Officer (Mental Health) on Halifax 63561.

Previous applicants need not re-apply.

Application packages are available from the Director of Social Services, Wellesley Park, Gibbet Street, Halifax HX2 0BA. Application forms to be returned by 9/9/88.

This council is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and service provider.

Conferences

Women in the Countryside

National Conference

18 October 1988

National Agricultural Centre
Stoneleigh
Warwickshire

A major national conference on women, work and the countryside. Speakers include Joanna Foster, EOC; Joan Davies, NFWI; Sarah Buchanan, NCVO.

For details contact:
Beverley Harrison
Royal Agricultural Society of England
National Agricultural Centre
Stoneleigh
Warwickshire CV8 2LZ
Tel 0203 696969

Sponsored by the Rural Development Commission and National Westminster Bank

SEMINAR

HIV INFECTION THROUGH DRUG USE

Wednesday 26 October 1988

9.30 am - 4.30 pm

You are invited to attend a seminar on HIV infection caused by the sharing of injecting equipment used for drug taking. This is part of an ongoing programme on AIDS prevention, caring and treatment.

The speakers will be:
Dr John Strang, Consultant, DDU, the Maudsley Hospital; Mrs Joy Roulston, Aberlour Child Trust; Dr Massimo Riccio, Psychiatrist; Ms Jennie James, John Hunter Clinic, St Stephen's Hospital; Mr Stuart Menzies and Ms Sophie Foot, Mainliners; and, Dr Veronica Moss, Medical Director and Mrs Sims, Director of Nursing, Mildmay Mission Hospital.

Fee: £35, including morning coffee, lunch with wine and afternoon tea.

For an application form and further details, contact: Mrs Chris Wonham, Conference Organiser, Mildmay Mission Hospital, Hackney Road, London, E2 7NA (01-739 2331).

As places are strictly limited, applications will be dealt with on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Programmes also available for "THE NURSING CARE OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS" on Tuesday 15th November 1988.

Agenda

C.G. JUNG
Five introductory talks on Jung's psychology

Wednesdays at 8pm
Essex Church, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace, Notting Hill Gate, London, W8

Sept 21 ○ Oct 5,19 ○ Nov 2,30

Price: £3 per session payable at the door

Organised by the Analytical Psychology Club

THE BENEFITS SCANDAL

John Edmonds, Hector McKenzie, Shaheen Raj, Tess Gill
ACTION FOR BENEFITS

T.U.C. FRINGE MEETING

Monday 5th September

Circle Bar, Bournemouth Pavilion

12.45 - 2pm

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY SOCIETY OF THE UK Come along, hava a drink and discuss Australian politics in a friendly Aussie atmosphere. Regular guest speakers with an antipodean flavour. We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at the Marquis of Granby, Chandos Street, by Trafalgar Square. Contact Kate O'Rourke on 01-837 8614.

Mon 5 Sep

LONDON HISTORY WORKSHOP SEMINAR. Peter Higginson 'Caravaggio and the Depiction of Poverty'. 7.30 p.m. at the White Swan, 14 New Row, London, WC2.

Tue 6 Sep

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION: Fringe meeting on The Future of the NHS at the TUC Conference. 12.45 pm, Mezzanine Suite, Royal Bath Hotel, Bath Road, Bournemouth. Free Refreshments.

Sat 10 Sep

NALGO DISABILITY ACTION GROUP. Conference for all NALGO members with a disability from the Greater London area. 10 am to 4.30 pm, NALGO HQ, 1 Mabledon Place, London, WC1. Full access including palyntype, signers, braille, tape and creche. Further details: Mavis Condon on 01-458 9211.

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Courses/Training

The Richmond Fellowship College, Scotland

ONE YEAR TRAINING PROGRAMME

TUESDAYS, OCTOBER 1988 UNTIL JUNE 1989

This programme consists of a variety of modules designed for people in a range of helping disciplines. It will be particularly valuable to workers involved in helping people with mental health problems, residential work, field work and day care.

Modules include:

Counselling — October to March (16 sessions)
Mental Health — October to December (8 sessions)
Groupwork — October to December, April to June (16 sessions)
Human Growth and Development — January to March (8 sessions)
Residential Management Skills — January to March (8 sessions)
Community Care Sequence — April to June (8 sessions)

Fee per module: £90

Whole programme: £900

Further information and application form from: Jan Johnston, Scottish Training Co-ordinator, Richmond Fellowship, 33 Huntly Gardens, Glasgow G12 9AX. Tel: 041-339 2452/9744.

RPMS Institute of Obstetrics & Gynaecology
(University of London)

SYMPOSIA

to be held at
Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital, London

Course Code		
88.41	ETHICAL PROBLEMS IN PERINATAL MEDICINE	22 Sept 88
88.42	THE ROLE OF SELF HELP IN FAMILY CARE	23 Sept 88
88.29	SEXUAL ABUSE IN CHILDREN	11 Oct 88

Further details from:

Symposium Secretary
RPMS Institute of Obstetrics & Gynaecology
Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea Hospital
Goldhawk Road
London W6 0XG

Tel. 01-740 3904

ONE YEAR GESTALT GROUP. 1 evening a week for 3 terms plus 1 day per term. Starting on October 18th. GESTALT APPROACHES IN COUNSELLING. 1 day Workshops Tuesday September 27th and November 8th. £25. Venue: North London. For further information please telephone 01-263 4778 or write to M. Ellis, 4 Stanley Terrace, London, N19 4JX.

Exhibitions

EXHIBITION: 'UNHEARD MELODIES'

CAMDEN ARTS CENTRE
Arkwright Road, NW3 (435 2643)

M-F 10.30-5.30; Sat & Sun 2-6

Abstract Paintings by Clifford Myerson until September 5 - possible extension to 12.9.88.

Phone for details

Contacts

FEMINIST MOTHER returning to work in November part-time, seeks similar to share child-care in the Haringey area. Telephone: 01 802 7048.

Awards

FRANK COUSINS' TGWU PEACE AWARD SCHEME

The Transport and General Workers' Union invites applications for the 1988 Frank Cousins' Peace Prize.

The aim of the scheme is to assist with research, travel or other projects which promote peace, disarmament and/or arms conversion.

The award is worth £4,000.

Applications, from individuals or organisations, should be made in writing (there is no application form) detailing the way in which the award would be used. They will be judged by a panel comprised of representatives of the TGWU and prominent personalities from the labour and peace movements.

Applications should be sent to:

Regan Scott, Secretary to the Award Panel, Transport and General Workers' Union, Transport House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JB.

THE CLOSING DATE IS: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21 1988.

Meetings

THEOSOPHY Wisdom Religion Informal meetings Sundays 8pm on Reincarnation, Karma, Death, Clairvoyance, Spiritualism, Cyclic law, SAS for programme, information: ULT, 62 Queens Gardens, London, W2 3AH.

Billboard — Theatre

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY 01 638 8891. Evening performances 7.30 pm, Matinees 2pm, Thursday and Saturday. BARBICAN THEATRE: 2-6 (7pm) Sept THE TAMING OF THE SHREW. 7-8 Sept THREE SISTERS by Chekhov. THE PIT: 2-6 Sept THE BIGHT OF THE NIGHT by Howard Barker, 7-8 Sept HYDE PARK by James Shirley. THE ALMEIDA: 2-6 Sept HELLO AND GOODBYE by Athol Fugard, 7-8 Sept KEEPING TOM NICE by Lucy Gannon.

NATIONAL THEATRE 01-928 2252. Olivier (open stage) THE SHAUGHRAUN by Dion Boucicault, SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) THE CHANGELING, CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF. Cottesloe (small stage) STRANGENESS OF OTHERS, MRS KLEIN by Nicholas Wright. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

Booksellers

ECONOMICS COLLECTIONS BOUGHT. Also, review copies, Politics, History, Sociology, ECONOMISTS' BOOKSHOP, Secondhand Dept. Ring for appointment. 01-405 8643.

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermilion Books, 57 Red Lion Street, London, WC1 Telephone: 01-242-5822.

SCARCE BOOK SERVICE. List wants. 01-876 7254. Hammersmith Books, High Street, London, SW13 9LR.

Holidays/Travel

CUBA. Now taking bookings for 1989. Groups, Individual or Specialist parties. Trips arranged to suit your every need. Vacancies still available for 1988. Ashley Holidays 0709 544083.

DISCOUNTED FLIGHTS, Italy, France, Scandinavia, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Yugo. Charter/Schedule. AIRFORCE. 01-506-2233.

Accommodation

LARGE ROOM VACANT for committed person in Housing Association house, Highbury. £120 pcm, £200 deposit. Phone 01-226 2570.

WEST HARROW. Room in house. All mod cons. Tube 2 mins. N.S. £50 p.w. 01-423 0906. From Friday evening.

Heartsearch

ATTRACTIVE JEWISH WOMAN, 54, would like to meet a bloke to cheer her up; eating out, theatre, concerts, movies etc. Birmingham area. Write Box (34) 090.

TRY SCOTTISH LETTER LINK for a new way to contact people outside your usual circle. S.A.E. to P.O. Box 61, Edinburgh, EH3 6JW.

Enrich Your Social Life!

Are you looking for that special person or just more opportunities to meet kindred spirits? Savoir Vivre is different. Designed for the discerning and sophisticated, it provides more interesting introductions.

Telephone 084 82 611 anytime or write to:

SAVOIR VIVRE
A Social Contact Network
Ref: NS TYNRON,
THORNHILL DG3 4LG

VERY ATTRACTIVE CAREER GIRL 27, seeks an educated, sophisticated professional male Londoner interested in good food, wine and intelligent conversation. My first ad. S.A.E. ensures reply. Write Box (34) 088.

SOCIOLOGIST, DIVORCED, 50's in despair, seeks genuine attractive caring woman, preferably Midlands or North. No materialism but warmth and affection. Box (34) 087.

ATTRACTIVE, COMPATIBLE PARTNERS, carefully screened for educated romantics. Personal attention. Reasonable fees. Hedi Fisher introductions. 45/46 Chalk Farm Road, NW1. Tel: 01-267 6066. w/e 01-883 0401.

OLD FRIENDS: an introduction agency for the over forties. Loneliness is not inevitable. Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London, N5 2DB. Tel: 01-226-5432.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details from: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London, W8. Phone: 01-938-1011.

IMPRESSIONISTS FROM RUSSIA. Sincere, easy-going, idealistic/realistic, non-smoker, wishes to share September Beethoven Festival, galleries, books, countryside with genuine, loyal, open-hearted woman, 42/58. Aim: possible subsequent commitment. Write Box (35) 094.

23 YEAR OLD GENTLEMAN seeks older lady for companionship and friendship. Interests include classical music, cinema, theatre and dining out. Write Box (35) 095.

YORKSHIREMAN, wordly-wise and much travelled, non-smoker, independent and unattached, 60 years young, own small business, creative country lover, needs good woman to share a vital life with. Any plan considered. Genuine. Please write to Box (35) 096.

ATTRACTIVE LADY, 50, Drama Graduate actively interested in the Arts, Books, Classical Music. Enjoys the countryside, travel, meeting interesting, unusual people, seeks well educated, professional male companion. London area. Please write to Box (35) 097.

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THE DIGGER

Michael Leapman characteristically looks forward to a satisfying September

September is one of the most satisfying months on the allotment but also one of the most strenuous. Because I grow a second early variety of potato, now is the time to dig them up and cart them home. Growers of maincrop varieties usually wait until October.

Every year I am surprised how quickly the potatoes stalks die down. One week they are a healthy shade of green, swaying in the wind; next week they are yellow and decaying, and a week after that they have virtually disappeared. This makes digging them hazardous, because it is hard to locate the stems. I have never discovered a way of avoiding spiking some—usually the biggest—with the fork.

The first diggings suggest that the yield will be satisfactory but will not match last year's bumper crop. I planted them in a rectangular block this time—not for any scientific reason, but because that happened to be the shape of the available patch. One corner has encouraged large, baking-sized spuds, but they get smaller as you move across. The better end is right at the edge of the allotment. It had not been used for serious cultivation for a year or two, which seems to support theories about crop rotation.

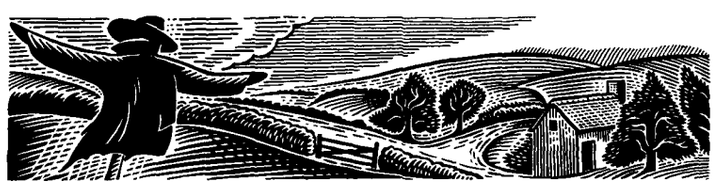
I had a trial dig of parsnips last week: much too early according to the books but they seemed to be of a fair size already and I thought I'd experiment. They are blander at this time of year than in the winter, the recommended digging season. I don't use the vaunted crowbar method, by which you make a deep hole with a crowbar, fill it with loose soil and plant the seed in that, ensuring straight growth. One reason I don't is that the allotment is just beyond the walls of Brixton Prison, and if the police ever raid my shed a crowbar could be hard to explain away. The other reason is that I rather enjoy the weird shapes into which the uncrowbarred roots get contorted. My ambition is to grow one suggestive enough to send to Esther Rantzen for *That's Life*.

At least the parsnips gave us a gastronomic break from the scallop-shaped squash I wrote about a couple of weeks ago—now more prolific than ever—and from the climbing French bean. When I last mentioned these I noted the poor germination and was worried whether my rickety support structure would survive high winds. It's OK so far and even with comparatively few plants we've been overwhelmed and are eating our way doggedly through them. They have a subtler flavour than the dwarf runners alongside, which have yielded less spectacularly, but I think will show greater staying power. The French beans seem virtually finished now, but the runners are still producing their bright red flowers and will be in production for a few weeks yet.

My red and white cabbages are the size of footballs and the sprouts and cauliflower look promising. They have all been less plagued this year with whitefly, an irritating scourge. On BBC2's *Gardeners' World* the other day a Welsh allotment-holder blithely told us that whitefly do the crops no harm. This may be true but they are dreadfully unsightly. Some take the same cavalier attitude towards weeds but gardening, especially in a semi-public plot, is about appearances as much as results. I'm surprised the BBC encourages such sloppiness. I hope Sir William Rees-Mogg's new Broadcasting Standards Council will be empowered to curb anarchic, horticultural tendencies at a time when children are still watching.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward laments that community initiatives are to be replaced by the community charge



One of my very few inventions was the phrase "the community workshop" in *Anarchy*, August 1963. So a quarter of a century later I always feel a glow of pleasure when I hear of a successful venture under that name. And consequently a spasm of pain to learn that Norwich community workshop faces closure this month because of yet another sudden change in the government's unemployment strategy.

The community programme, already notoriously inflexible and short-term in its support for local initiatives, is to be abandoned as yet another scheme, the adult training programme is introduced.

Now I don't claim to be more far-sighted than anyone else, but in April 1972 I published in the *Bulletin of Environmental Education* a really important paper by John Ewen, then of the National Youth Bureau, initiating the idea of a community industry. He stressed that it was not to be confused with expedients to keep the young occupied with notions of voluntary community service, still less with those about conscript community service.

It was to be a recognition that unemployment was a permanent aspect of post-industrial Britain. Ewen envisaged a whole new industry of community maintenance which would pay appropriate rates and in which a career structure would emerge, operating in environmental improvement, housing renewal, social and health services.

Vocational training was to be an integral part, but he reminded us that the prolongation of schooling would only be useful if the most radical changes took place in the attitude of schools and colleges to the group he had in mind, since its motivation was "almost diametrically opposed to ongoing formal education".

Well, the community industry was initiated, but to the bitter disappointment of John Ewen, as a short-term stop-gap. It actually gave birth to the Manpower Services Commission, which grew and grew and swallowed up its parent and a lot else beside, begetting all those schemes with bewildering initials that subsidise some of the jobless young in employment, or give them a motive to get up in the morning, with the usual endless arguments about made work or cheap labour.

Ordinary parents and teachers, let alone the young, get lost in an ever changing series of initials (remember YOPS and TOPS?), and must even get used to the idea that the MSC itself is to re-emerge as the Training Commission. I'm not a conspiracy-theorist. I've met people who have benefitted greatly from MSC-funded initiatives. But I can't help feeling that the endless shifts destroy accountability, continuity and any attempt at evaluation.

At one level nameless people whisper in the ear of an unelected minister in the House of Lords, and policy changes. At another, unofficial bodies with useful social aims, use up their energies and resources, and even change their policies, so as to be eligible for job-creating support, only to discover that the rules have changed and another set of boots have to be licked. At yet another there are local authorities charged with providing a service to the community who find themselves arraigned for over-spending, while new money from central government is provided to meet the same need, through initiatives that can be switched on or off by guidelines which you and I don't understand.

But beyond all this, people like me, and I am sure, John Ewen, who are not politicians, nor academics, nor civil servants, have a nasty, niggling feeling that we should have been able to read the writing on the wall, generations ago. Could our mistake have been that it was automatic for us to make use of that loaded word "community"?

The community workshop, the community industry and the community programme are to be expunged. What you will be left with is the community charge.

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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3041 Set by Miles Kington
Holorimes, please, on any subject you like (see how magnanimous we are). For those who don't *quite* remember back to the last *NS* holorime competition, a holorime is a two-line poem where the second line sounds exactly like the first but means something entirely different. It must be preceded by an explanatory title (sometimes longer than poem itself) as will become clear. We want English holorimes, but here's a French example:

Par le bois du Djinn, ou s'entasse de l'effroi,
Parle! Bois du gin, ou cent tasses de lait froid!

(When going through the Djinn's wood, surrounded by so much fear, keep talking! Drink gin, or a hundred cups of cold milk!) Entries to be in by 14 September, when they will be judged by Mr Kington himself.

No 3038 Set by E O Parrott
Sentimental songs about South Africa, Chile, Libya, Albania, Thatcher's Britain or anywhere similarly inappropriate.

Report by Sorley Mist
Weel, it ha' bin a long, long time, t'be sure, sin we last aw met i' the gloamin' and sang aboot the banks an' braes o' bonny doon. Yoor musical talents are e'er with ye still and muchel guid ha' it done me tae see the likes o' your brave entries. A guid wee few of ye did not quite understand yon worrd "sentimental" I ken, and wrote protest songs instead. A tenner foor the winners and a wee bitty fiver extra foor Stanley Sharpless and and D Ken Bidford.

In Durban's fair city, where the girls are so pretty,
I first set my eyes on Veronica Pugh
As she lay out of reach on the "White's Only" beach,
Singing, "Kaffir, dear Kaffir, I love, I love you!"

Her moves were so forward, I followed her shoreward
To the bungalow door where she beckoned me through.
But the music of flutes turned to crunching of boots,
Crying, "Kaffir, vile Kaffir, I'll have, I'll have you!"

She lied to the court, as no judge or reporters
Could think that a white girl behaved like Miss Pugh.
Soon my ghost will roam free where she tans by the sea,
Singing, "Kaffir, dear Kaffir, I loved, I loved you!"

Gavin JS Ross

Take me back to the streets of Santiago,
Where electrodes and the *bastinado* rule;
And where sens'ry deprivation
Ain't no wonder, no sensation,
And a wise guy stays at home and keeps his cool.

O I'm pinin' for that home where there's no freedom,
Where tear-gas and the gun enforce the law;
Now it ain't so goddam trendy
To revere the creep Allende,
And all good men fight the anti-Commie war.

With my bed-roll I'm a-heading south for Chile,
For the land of dear old General Pinochet;
And I ain't much afeared
That I'll join the Disappeared,
'Cos I'm workin' for the US CIA.

Watson Weeks

There's a corner of the Med that's been forgotten,
It's on the Adriatic, north of Greece,
A place I've never been to, but one day soon I mean to
Take a ticket and indulge this odd caprice:

I've got a mania for Albania,
I can hear it calling from afar,
It's cut off from the West,
That's why I like it best,
And no one there's allowed to have a car;
Albania, Albania,
My Baltic Ruritania,
I'll get zanier and zanier till I'm there;
Oh, how I'd love to jog
Through the land of ex-King Zog,
And consummate this long-range love affair!

Stanley J Sharpless

Comrades Dear, my heart is grievin'
For the homeland I believe in,
For today I must be leavin'—old Albania! ▶

CHESS

Last week I gave games 3 and 4 of the Short-Speelman world championship quarter-final, both won by Jon Speelman. Those two defeats meant that Nigel Short had to win both the remaining games to carry the match into a play-off. So in looking at the moves of the fifth game we must remember the special competitive context—a draw was as good as a win for White, yet to Black it was equivalent to a loss.

Speelman-Short, Game 5. Reti Opening.
1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d5 4. Bg2 dxc4 Not played in the hope of gaining a pawn, but rather to open the position for active counter-play on the Q-side. 5. Qc2 a6 6. Ne5 Nd5 7. Nxc4 b5 8. Ne3 Nxe3 I prefer 8...Bb7. As played, the doubled e-pawns give White a very solid structure, and Black loses valuable tempi with his Queen's Rook. **9. dxe3 Ra7 10. a4! Bb7 11. e4 Ra8 12. 0-0 Be7 13. Rd1 Qc8 14. Bf4 Nc6 15. Na3** Speelman's purposeful play—in particular at the 10th move where one might routinely castle—has subjected the Black pawns to intense pressure. To avoid loss they are now forced to advance to squares on which they become weak and lifeless. **e5 16. Be3 b4 17. Nc4 0–0 18. Rac1 Re8** Having to win from a position in which his pawns are compromised and his pieces inactive, Short can only bide his time and hope for a mistake. **19. Nd2 Rd8 20. Nb3 Rxd1+ 21. Rxd1 Bd6 22. Bc5 Qe6 23. e3 Rc8** A forlorn hope that White will present him with a file by exchanging on d6. Note the strength of the doubled e-pawns, covering the vital squares d4, d5, f4, and f5. **24. Bf1 Ne7 25. Rc1 Qg4 26. Bg2 h5 27. Na5 Ba8** Short is doing his best to create some threats on the Q-side, but it doesn't amount to much. Meanwhile White can start knocking off the weak Black pawns. **28. Qc4 Bxc5 29. Qxc5 Ng6 30. h3 Qe2 31. Qxb4 Rd8** A file at last! However, the threat of...Rd2 is easily parried. **32. Bf1 Qf3 33. Bg2 Qf6** A cruel moment for Short. He knew the best move was 33...Qe2, but knew also that he could not allow the position to be repeated. **34. Nc4 Bc6 35. Qa5 Be8 36. Qxc7 Bxa4 37. Qb6 Bb5** and a draw was agreed. From Speelman's point of view this was a draw from a position of strength, since he was a pawn up with the better position. If the game were to be continued, White would play 38. Qxf6 gxf6 39. Nb6 followed by 40. Nd5 (with *b2-b4 and Bg2-f1 also on the agenda*) with every prospect of winning.

So Speelman marches on to the semi-finals where he will face the winner of the Timman-Portisch match. Given the versatile and acute way he played against Short he will go into the semi-final match as the favourite—quite a new experience for Jon! If Speelman has a weakness, it is modesty. Not for him any of this *Chess-is-my-life* stuff or Kasparovian guff about destiny. In conversation he is more likely to say that it's only a game, and that he may be good at it, but he's not that good. The ultimate obstacle on the path to Kasparov is of course Karpov, who lurks in the other half of the draw (Karpov v Hjartarson and Yusupov v Spraggett).

But let us spare a thought for the loser. Speelman may have proved his worth, but he would be the first to agree that this match does not establish that he is a better player than Nigel. Short suffered from a nervy start, was surprised in the opening in the third game, and that was effectively that. Back in 1843 Staunton won a match in Paris against St Amant, one of several that could claim to be the first world championship. It is not so widely known that this was a *return* match. Earlier in the year St Amant had beaten Staunton in a match in London. But the Englishman objected that the match was too short to be a proper test of skill—it was over a mere six games! And here we are a century and a half later...

There would be little consolation in this for Short if he had nothing to look forward to but the next world championship cycle. But there is now something else. He can put all his efforts into the World Cup *grand prix*, and in particular into breaking up the Karpov-Kasparov duopoly. For some time it has been a depressing business talking to other GMs about the two Ks. All you hear is the despondent moan: *They are just so much better than the rest of us.* This is one of those things that becomes true if it is thought to be true. But Nigel has already beaten Kasparov and won a tournament in front of Karpov. He can do all his fellow GMs a tremendous service by beating the two Ks in the World Cup, and thus breaking the psychological bind.

I hope you have noticed that the two most successful English players of recent months, Speelman and Mestel (1988 British champion), are also our two judges for the **Assiac Memorial** study tourney. In the middle of all their campaigns they had time to draw up a shortlist of the best studies from 35 entries submitted by composers from 12 different countries. Overall, the standard was very high and there are several compositions I am itching to publish. So we need one final conference to sort out the order of the prize-winners, and then I shall be presenting our own set of *New Statesman & Society* originals.

George Botterill

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With the factions' bullets flyin'
Where the history books are lyin'
There my former friends are dyin', in Albania.

Our economy's so static
And elections automatic,
Party Line's still acrobatic, in Albania—

So I'd happily have rested
Only I'd have been arrested
And quite nastily molested—in Albania.

But quite soon I'll be return',
My opponents will be learnin'
That it's them that will be burnin'—in Albania!

D Ken Bidford

Soweto, Soweto,
You dusty old town,
Where whites must give way to
A black skin or brown.
You can keep the tree lined streets of Durban,
(How urban!)
Jo'burg is a concrete white man's hell!

Soweto, Soweto,
You've captured my heart,
And there's not a way to
Keep me and you apart.
Just give me a necklace made of a tyre,
And I'll show the way to set me on fire
In Soweto, that town I know so well.

Katie Mallett

IF THE CAP FITS

No 83

Captions, speech or thinks bubbles, please, for this exclusive photo of the Ayatollah Khomeini hearing the news that the war is over. Entries on a postcard, to be in by 9 September. A tenner for the winner.

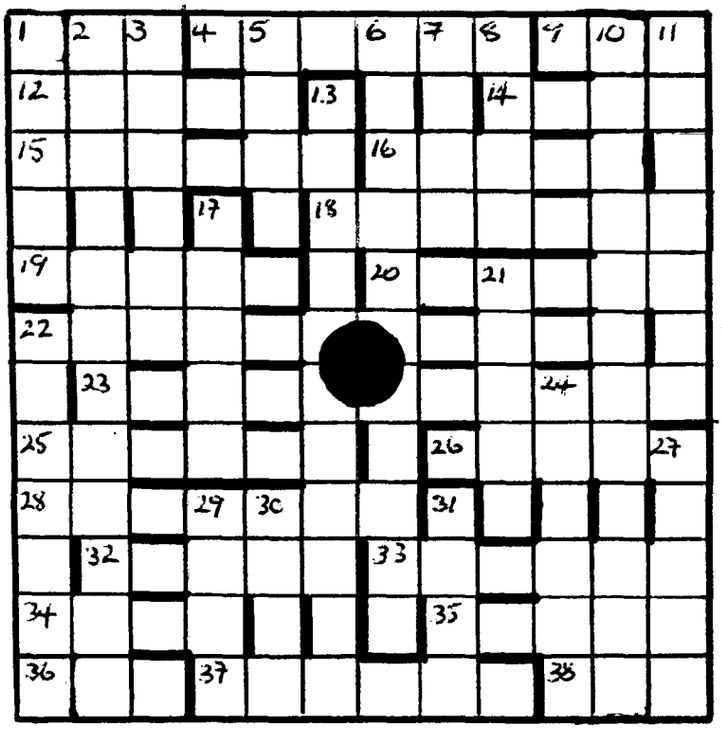
Winner No 81

Prince William: "I shall tell Daddy!" *(George Cowley, Worcestor.)*

SALAMANCA

COLLINS DICTIONARIES

PRIZES: Copies of the *Collins Concise English Dictionary* for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 138, New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 3 October.



Five variations on the centre squares should be shape-located and suitably illustrated in the final grid.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Salamanca 138: "Rise & Fall"

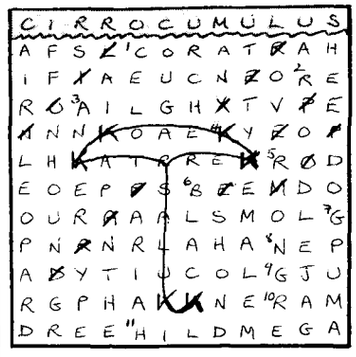
ACROSS

1. Father and a little brother (3)
4. Opening settlement take in some brandy (6)
9. Short squat flier largely (3)
12. No longer sluggish but idling, right? Yes (5)
14. A length of rolled fabric (4)
15. One holding 99 pesewas, say, to come foward (6)
16. One fellow at length Her Majesty's confined (5)
18. Fancy windows in form of a cross, each opening on the inside (7)
19. In address to a gentleman you'ld need a different one when going round (abroad) (5)
20. Pot making fug (when boiling) Jock's filled to the brim (6)
22. Lustreless and tediously moral in hugging one—this could be *such* a *complaint!* (11)
23. Money got at no place of trade around foreigners (11)
25. Are masculine, in flying (6)
26. Spot number of Scots round edge of loch (5)
28. Somewhat literary, better for taking in a little sci-fi (7)
32. A gin's for carving something round from this? (5)
33. Flora's good-natured descendants in Spain (6)
34. Smack or beat with end of thong (4)
35. No longer dig deep in a deadly place (5)
36. Tricky child dropping lid of drain on end of toe (left foot) (3)
37. Old book token bearing seal (6)
38. Trotter, say, part of sow and elt (3)

DOWN

1. What borer puts out from front half and rear end? (5)
2. Thus described, outdoor activities are clean or dirty: time one's put in is so? (12)
3. A track for climbing (6)
5. Island ferry destination (you'll have put in there) (4)
6. Where in Greece people are strange and grasping about money that's raised (11)
7. Letters on page man's written (4)
8. Grass exposing some criminal families (4)
10. Not like mirror-glass with fleet curve in perhaps (12)
11. Three heads of old France issuing passes to cover New Style Union meeting (7)
13. Is once more socially acceptable, awfully precise (11)
17. Scots sweetheart giving powerful male large drink (5)
21. Scots chap who's rested up at length (5)
22. Biblical race-member with little time to have a little meal (7)
24. E.g. "Buy our paper and be unhappy no longer" (6)
27. Prepare to meet King (on his opening new East wing) (5)
29. Litter (in Japan), a double affair (4)
30. Kinsman, according to Scott's notebooks? (4)
31. ----'s, say, to be so shaggy, in need of grooming? (4)

Solution to Salamanca 137



(Raining) cats & dogs. Across: 1 cor, aura, flash. 2 reif, ice, ounce. 3 ail, ghat, prove. 4 kye, open, oaken. 5 rod, lakh, terek. 6 bee, mooed, epos. 7 Goura. alas, mil. 8 nep, pern, lahar. 9 gu, adyta, clou. 10 ram, graph. kine. 11 hild, men, deare.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 137

Roger Hooper (London SW19)
Andrew Bremner (Arizona, USA)
P R Sexton (Pinner, Middx)

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BACKCHAT

Michelene Wandor on the quivering joy of an amateur in a public performance

Freshly returned from my second music course this summer, I ponder on the ethos of amateurism, its pleasures and its vulnerabilities. There we were, 90 participants and six tutors, making chamber music for a week. Driven purely by the pleasure principle, we engaged (sometimes to the point of exhaustive intensity) in an activity free from the dictates of market forces and the mixed blessing of professionalism. The music we play (mainly Renaissance/baroque) depends on genuine group collaboration; there are always degrees of leadership within that, but fundamentally the process won't work unless there is a real will to ensemble work.

Of course, it is a shifting and uneven process. You can have a session in which everyone plays pretty badly but has an absolutely hilarious time doing so. Conversely, you can have a session in which the music is accurate, and even expressive, but feels soulless. The Platonic ideal is an ensemble which is a sum of its collaborations, social and musical—leading to an experience where people's pleasure in each other and the sound produces a moment of expressive fulfilment.

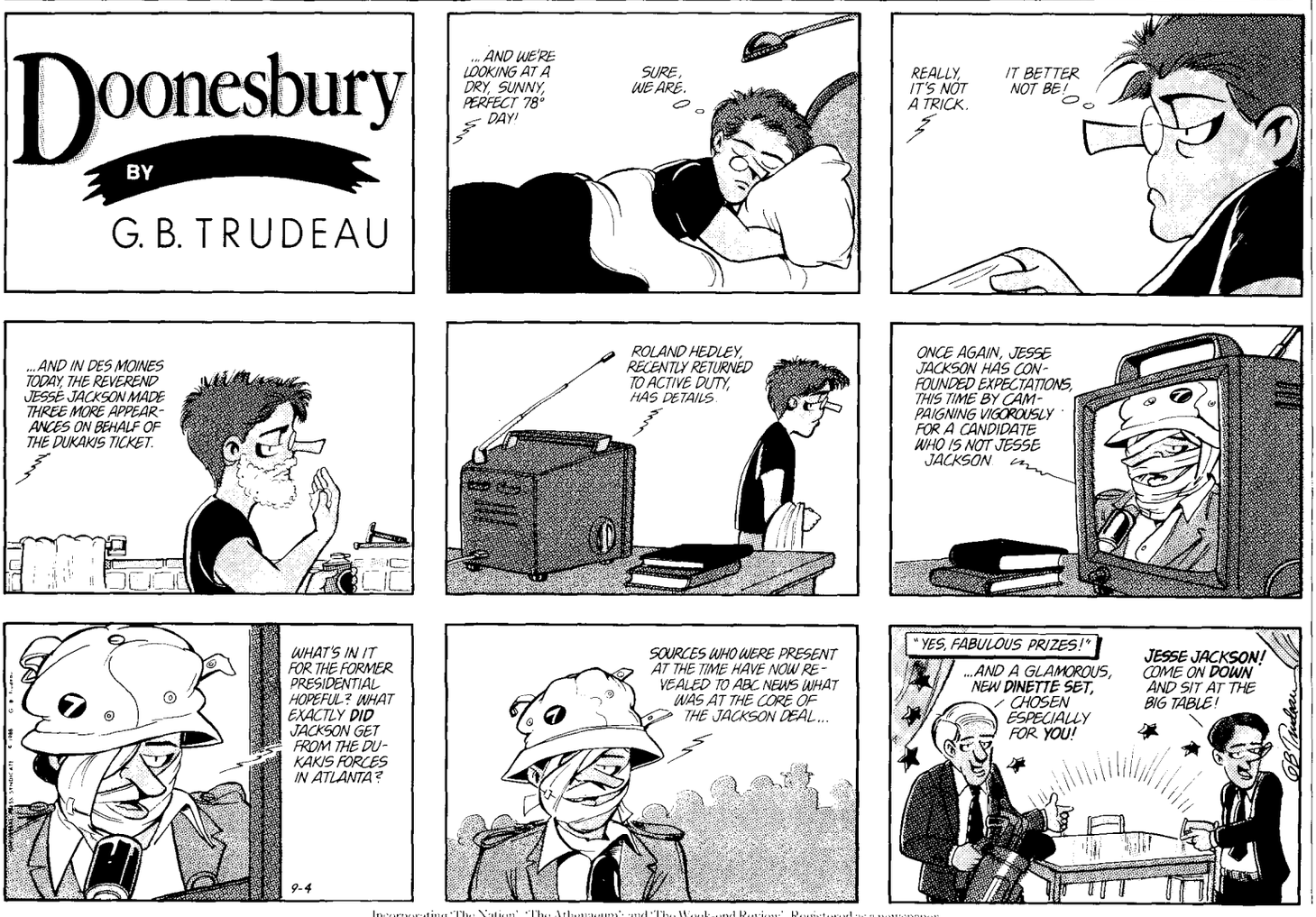
Of course, this is also a professional goal; the difference, I believe, is one of degree rather than kind. As amateurs we are not solely concerned with the quality of the product. Our reputations and livelihoods are not dependent upon it, and we can afford to bask in the rewards of the process, trying difficult work because we want to, benefitting from professional tuition without worrying about the exam at the end of it, exploring music from the inside, finding new ways to be expressive in a form of performance that is—at its best—protected and mutually supported. Unlike professionals, our performances largely take place in private. We don't necessarily need an audience to make the music work.

And this is both the pleasure and the paradox. It has always seemed to me that amateur music (I've never liked the slighting word "hobby") is played by people who have a passion for the act of performance, however shy and retiring they may be in the rest of their lives. Given that almost the whole of my professional life is based around writing for performance I am probably bound to think that this is a good thing.

I don't subscribe to the view that a love of performance is merely due to a childish desire to show off; it is also a desire to share and communicate with others, whether you are on stage or in the audience.

Public performance is, however, a quantum leap away from the privacy of chamber music-making. The very presence of an audience raises the spectre of being judged by others. When the course concert began to loom at the end of the week, the joys of amateurism quivered a little. Theoretically it was a chance to share some of the nice times we'd had, some of the music we'd enjoyed, even to show off a little bit.

In practice the prospect of playing publicly made some people so anxious about being judged that they seemed to be doubting their abilities. And there I was on the cusp of my own professional/amateur divide, keen to perform some manageable music on a relatively new instrument (the viol), nervous of making a fool of myself and falling short in public of what I had achieved privately. I did perform (in two groups, show-off that I am...) and my bowing arm did shake with nerves; next time I hope it will shake less, so that I can continue to negotiate the public-private divide of the marvels of performance.


Doonesbury
BY
G. B. TRUDEAU
...AND WE'RE LOOKING AT A DRY, SUNNY, PERFECT 78° DAY!
SURE, WE ARE.
REALLY, IT'S NOT A TRICK.
IT BETTER NOT BE!
...AND IN DES MOINES TODAY, THE REVEREND JESSE JACKSON MADE THREE MORE APPEARANCES ON BEHALF OF THE DUKAKIS TICKET.
ROLAND HEDLEY, RECENTLY RETURNED TO ACTIVE DUTY, HAS DETAILS.
ONCE AGAIN, JESSE JACKSON HAS CONFOUNDED EXPECTATIONS, THIS TIME BY CAMPAIGNING VIGOROUSLY FOR A CANDIDATE WHO IS NOT JESSE JACKSON.
WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE FORMER PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL? WHAT EXACTLY DID JACKSON GET FROM THE DUKAKIS FORCES IN ATLANTA?
9-4
SOURCES WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE TIME HAVE NOW REVEALED TO ABC NEWS WHAT WAS AT THE CORE OF THE JACKSON DEAL...
"YES, FABULOUS PRIZES!"
...AND A GLAMOROUS, NEW DINETTE SET, CHOSEN ESPECIALLY FOR YOU!
JESSE JACKSON! COME ON DOWN AND SIT AT THE BIG TABLE!
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